GOD IS MY ADVENTURE

Few men have searched more open-heartedly for spiritual truth than Rom Landau; and that is the appeal of his book. When it first appeared in 1935 (and became an immediate best-seller) it gave the ordinary reader a rare insight into the movements and leaders of the inter-war years. The formidable Ouspensky, the mysterious Gurdjieff, Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group (now Moral Rearmament), Rudolf Steiner, the founder of anthroposophy, Krishnamurti, the golden boy of the theosophists—Rom Landau met them all, and others, ready always to take in the new message, feel the impact of strong, and strange, personalities, and ready also, his critical faculties undimmed, to sense the bogus and the pretentious. A postscript specially written for this edition brings it up to date and completes an unusual view of Europe's unfolding inner life.

by Rom Landau

Art Criticism

Minos the Incorruptible

Biography

Pilsudski
Paderewski

Autobiography

Seven
Of No Importance
The Wing
Personalia

World Affairs

Love for a Country
We have seen Evil
Hitler's Paradise
The Fool's Progress
Among the Americans

Philosophy and Religion

God is my Adventure
Thy Kingdom Come
Arm the Apostles
Letter to Andrew
Sex, Life and Faith
Human Relations

Fiction

The Brother Vane
The Merry Oasis
Odysseus

Arabica

Search for Tomorrow
Islam Today (with A. J. Arberry)
France and the Arabs
The Arabesque
Arab Contribution to Civilization
Islam and the Arabs
The Philosophy of Ibn Arabi
The Arab Heritage of Western Civilization

Morocco

Invitation to Morocco
The Sultan of Morocco
The Beauty of Morocco
Moroccan Journal
Portrait of Tangier
Morocco
Moroccan Drama 1900–1955
Mohammed V King of Morocco
Outline of Moroccan Culture
Morocco Independent
Hassan II King of Morocco
The Moroccans: Yesterday and Today
History of Morocco in the XXth Century (in Arabic)

ROM LANDAU

GOD IS MY ADVENTURE

LONDON · UNWIN BOOKS

First published (Ivor Nicholson and Watson) 1935
Reprinted October 1935
Reprinted November 1935
Reprinted November 1935
Reprinted February 1936
Reprinted September 1936
Reprinted December 1936
Reprinted June 1939
Transferred to Faber and Faber 1941
Reprinted 1943
Reprinted 1944
Reprinted 1945
Reprinted 1953
First published in this edition 1964

UNWIN BOOKS
George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
Ruskin House, Museum Street,
London, W.C.1

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
in 9 point Plantin
BY C. TINLING AND CO LTD
PRESCOT

Gratefully to

B

who taught me some of the best
yet most painful
lessons

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I WISH to acknowledge the following permissions and to express my thanks to the various authors and/or publishers and editors:

Messrs Basil Blackwell for quotation from *Oxford and the Groups;* Messrs Jonathan Cape for quotations from *Introduction to Keyserling*, by Mrs Gallagher Parks; Mr Harry Collison for quotations from his various translations of the books by Rudolf Steiner; Messrs J. M. Dent for quotations from the article 'More about the Perfect Master' in *Everyman;* The Hogarth Press for quotations from essays by Mr C. Day Lewis and Mr Michael Roberts in *New Country;* Messrs John Lane, the Bodley Head, for quotations from *Saints Run Mad*, by Marjorie Harrison; The Oxford University Press for quotations from *What is the Oxford Group ?*; Messrs Kegan Paul for quotations from *Mrs Annie Besant* by Theodore Besterman; Messrs Rider and Mr Paul Brunton for quotations from the latter's *A Search in Secret India;* Messrs Martin Secker for quotations from *Lorenzo in Taos*, by Mrs Mabel Dodge; and *The New Statesman and Nation* and Mr Bensusan for quotations from the latter's article 'Mother Earth and the Husbandman'; *The Sunday Chronicle* for quotations from the article 'This New Religion', by J. B. Priestley; *The Sunday Express* and Mr James Douglas for quotations from the latter's article 'Shri Meher Baba'; *The Evening Standard* for quotations from the article 'Dr Buchman', by Alva Johnstone; *The Times* for quotations from the leading article 'The Oxford Group Movement'.

Except for some excisions and corrections, the text of the first paperback edition of *God is My Adventure* is identical with that of the second edition. An entirely new postscript, however, surveying the relevant developments between 1935 and 1963, has been added.

INTRODUCTION

'THERE is something sacrilegious in your intention of writing such a book,' said a friend—and yet I went on with it.

I have always been attracted by those regions of truth that the official religions and sciences are shy of exploring. The men who claim to have penetrated them have always had for me the same fascination that famous artists, explorers or statesmen have for others—and such men are the subject of this book. Some of them come from the East, some from Europe and America; some give us a glimpse of truth by the mere flicker of an eyelid, while others speak of heaven and hell with the precision of mathematicians.

I have met most of them, have sought their company, questioned them and watched them closely at work. I have tried to dissociate the personality from the teaching and then to reconcile the two. I have included some of those whom I cannot view without mistrust. Since thousands of other people believe in them, they are at any rate interesting figures in contemporary spiritual life, however little of ultimate value their teaching may possess.

There are people who know the heroes of this book more intimately than I, but my aim has never been to identify myself with any one teacher. On the contrary, I have always been anxious to discover for myself through what powers they have influenced so many people.

This book is the confession of an adventure and the story of my friendships with those men whom a future generation may possibly consider among the prophets of our time. The core of the adventure is a search for God.

When the manuscript of *God is My Adventure* was first submitted to its original publishers, four of the five readers to whom the book was sent for a professional opinion, turned it down. The fifth pointed out that, whatever merits the book might possibly possess, it hardly justified publication since not more than a handful of people were ever likely to be interested in it.

Nevertheless the book became immediately a best-seller, and had to be reprinted more than a dozen times. I assume this has been due to two facts: people are always eager to learn from the experiences of a fellow seeker: many others, disillusioned by the Churches, were only too willing to delve into the ways and methods of unorthodox schools of thought, yet without at the same time feeling compelled

to accept this or that method as the only valid one. In spiritual research the utmost personal freedom is a *sine qua non*. The seeker may, and indeed does, demand that those of whose findings he reads, should have a definite viewpoint of their own. But he will draw back as soon as he suspects that he is being pontifically forced by the author into accepting a certain point of view.

If in *God Is My Adventure* no effort was made to impose dogmatic opinions upon the reader, this was not because of undue modesty on the part of the author, but rather because of his belief that none of the doctrines expounded by him had the monopoly of the 'whole' truth. In his opinion both the knowledge and the methods of the men under review were complementary to, rather than exclusive of, one another. And is it not a truism to say that a system which today perfectly fulfils our spiritual needs, may easily prove inadequate at some future stage of our search? Though truth is one, its facets differ, as do our means of comprehending it.

Books obviously cannot create a sense of spiritual urgency. But by demonstrating the reality and the power of what is spiritual in man, they can certainly intensify it. The response to *God Is My Adventure* leads me to believe that something of the urge responsible for the writing of the book, may possibly have been reflected in its pages. Moreover, many of the men described in it were concerned with methods of transforming spiritual ardour into practical action.

No one can solve the problems of his neighbour; how much less can books achieve this. Yet what they can do, is to indicate the way in which others have tried to meet their own problems. All faith and all search for truth share a common denominator. If our own vision of truth finds confirmation in the visions of our fellow seekers, we cannot but help feeling strengthened.

Every book or work of art which helps us to realize that the great events in the outside world are not independent of ourselves, but magnified projections of something within ourselves, has a useful function to perform. Whether our individual awareness grows through study, suffering, religion or personal relationships, is immaterial. What matters, is that we should become more acutely conscious of our responsibility in regard to those bigger events which appear to be beyond our own control. Division, like space, is a relative entity whose existence is limited to the material world alone. In the spiritual world neither of these have any existence. And since in the spiritual world it is the individual who counts, his motives and the workings of his mind are the forces that ultimately may have the power to tip the scales of historic events.

This book is not intended to disturb the serenity of those who are

unshaken in the faith they hold. Neither is it meant for those people who sweep aside anything that cannot be explained in terms of the matter of fact. It is meant neither for those who believe in the destruction of the individual for the glorification of an abstract State or a political doctrine. It deals with men who profess to have unveiled some divine truth which we could not have discovered for ourselves, but which, when it is shown to us by others to whom God has spoken, we can recognize as divine. Many of the activities of the men described in this book would (in the nineteenth century) have been called supernatural; but men, when seeking truth, have always studied the supernatural. Whether we read *Prometheus Bound*, *Hamlet*, *Faust* or the works of Homer, Dante, Milton, Shelley, we always find in them a preoccupation with the hidden powers that direct man's destiny from lands unknown.

There are more signs than one that we no longer live in a period in which to seek truth in supernatural regions would be considered as verging upon insanity. Are the waves generated by a little electric instrument and those produced by our minds so different as to exclude the possibility of similar results? Is the one more 'real' than the other?

Science has begun to admit that the world of the spirit and the world of matter are not two antipodes. The same applies to the natural and the supernatural worlds. A leading British astronomer, Sir James Jeans, confessed that the scientific conception of the universe in the past was mistaken, and that the borderline between the objective world, as it is manifested in nature, and the subjective one, as it expresses itself through the mind, hardly exists. In his presidential address at the annual meeting (1934) of the British Association at Aberdeen, he said: 'The Nature we study does not consist so much of something we perceive as of our perceptions; it is not the object . . . but the relation itself. There is, in fact, no clear-cut division between the subject and object.' Twenty years earlier such a statement would have been sheer heresy. Likewise, a search for the Ultimate Reality that we usually call 'God', a search along both intellectual and unorthodox lines, need not be regarded as either heresy or sacrilege.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION, *page* 7

PART ONE: THE UNKNOWN CONTINENT

I. Wisdom in Darmstadt: Count Keyserling, 15
II. Episodes in Modern Life: Stefan George and Bô Yin Râ, 25
III. Occult Truth: Rudolf Steiner, 33

PART TWO: THE ENGLISH ADVENTURE

Introduction: The English Scene, 57
IV. The Throne that was Christ's: Krishnamurti, 60
V. Portrait of a 'Perfect Master': Shri Meher Baba, 79
VI. Miracle at the Albert Hall: Principal George Jeffreys, 88
VII. The Man whose God was a Millionaire: Dr Frank Buchman, 103
VIII. War against Sleep: P. D. Ouspensky, 121
IX. Harmonious Development of Man: Gurdjieff, 136

PART THREE: FULFILMENTS

Introduction: Aryan Gods, 159
X. The Loneliness of Hermann Keyserling, 162
XI. The Testament of Rudolf Steiner, 181
XII. Krishnamurti in Carmel, 198
XIII. Conclusion: The Living God, 223
Postscript: The Last Thirty Years, 235
Index, 253

PART ONE

THE UNKNOWN CONTINENT

'God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.'

ST JOHN iv. 24.

CHAPTER I

Wisdom in Darmstadt: Count Keyserling

In no country after World War One could the desire for new ideals have been stronger than in Germany. Germany had become the melting pot of so many contradictory tendencies that some spectacular results were bound to follow. The Nazi Revolution fifteen years later was only one of them. In 1919 Germany was a country whose ideals had been destroyed. The paradox of a nation situated, both in the geographical and spiritual sense, in a critical position between the Western and the first outposts of the Eastern world; a nation intellectually keen, full of an exaggerated pride and of a burning desire for power, yet in the throes of an unparalleled defeat; bursting with a talent for organization, yet limited in her activities and stifled in her aspirations by an indecisive Peace Treaty; such a paradox was bound to create conditions in which the most extraordinary movements could flourish.

Though life in Germany in the period after the war was anything but pleasant, I do not regret having spent several years there at that epoch. The experience was not always edifying but it never failed to be enlightening.

Most values in German life had shifted; such words as 'faith' had but little meaning, and the few existing beliefs had solely an intellectual character. Serious problems were mostly treated with cynicism. The poorer classes knew nothing but resignation and bitterness, and the upper classes followed any fashion and craze that made them forget their unreal existence. This was especially evident in Berlin. In many places of entertainment, men dressed up as women and women in masculine attire added to the sense of the unreality of sex. The price of a body was as low as the price of cocaine or some newer drug which would destroy for a few hours the last vestige of reality. Yet in most cases cynicism and flippancy were but a mask concealing the anxiety which at times assumed proportions of real terror. People were constantly preoccupied with such questions as: What were the realities of German life? What of the stability of the German Republic?

Certain sections of the younger generation tried to find new values

in life through movements built on the pattern of the English Boy Scouts. In some of these one could find vague metaphysical, homosexual and above all political elements, many of which found unmistakable realization fourteen years later in the Nazi Storm Troops and the Nazi Movement in general. One might say that it was the moment of a darkly occult and a sexual awakening of German youth. The body with all its functions came into its own; the world of the spirit did not come into its own, but it was discovered by people who formerly would have denied its very existence.

In the provinces there was much less cynicism than in Berlin, and serious spiritual efforts could only be expected in the smaller German towns. They still enjoyed an atmosphere conducive to serious thinking. Stefan George lived in Bingen on the Rhine; Rudolf Steiner, the teacher for whom occultism was becoming as precise a science as mathematics, had settled just across the frontier at Dornach near Basle; Oswald Spengler, author of *The Decline of the West*, was pouring out his pessimistic philosophy in voluminous tracts from a prussianized Munich. None of them, however, had gained such a spectacular success as Count Hermann Keyserling, who had just opened a 'School of Wisdom' in Darmstadt, the small capital of the former Grand Duchy of Hesse. Keyserling's fame spread over the spiritual horizon of Germany overnight, and this fame was due to his origins and to his looks at least as much as to his uncommon philosophical attitude. People compared his narrow eyes and high cheekbones with those of Ghenghis Khan, and they talked of him as though he were an Eastern autocrat. The name of the 'School of Wisdom', situated conveniently in a former grand-ducal residence, impressed the simple and amused the sophisticated. This academy was said to promise the delivery of spiritual goods that would enable the pupils to climb the ladder of a new human order. This new 'élite' was to absorb Eastern and Western wisdom and thus obtain a proper understanding of its own duties and powers. This would be achieved mainly by attaching a new value to old problems.

It all sounded most promising. It was the sort of school that would appeal to eager intellectuals of post-war Germany. The future of the school was not romantically left in the hands of fate; it was virtually assured by the sensational success which Count Keyserling had just achieved with his *Travel Diary of a Philosopher*, for this book was more widely read than either travel books or books by philosophers. There was something irresistible in the spectacle of a philosopher who, instead of brooding over books in his study, travelled the

world *en prince*. Count Hermann tried to draw out the spiritual essence of most countries outside Europe, mainly in Asia. He had absorbed the soul of nation after nation with magic rapidity. Though the significant truths about those countries may not always have fitted into the mould which the imperious count had shaped for them, the book still contained enough truth about India, China, Japan, Hawaii and America to satisfy Germany's thirst for knowledge.

The success of the two large volumes was not surprising. There had always been a large public in Germany for new intellectual manifestations. The disappointment caused by a lost war had produced both mental hunger and the wish to escape everyday realities. Intellectual achievement coupled with an aristocratic name was bound to exercise a strong fascination over the citizens of the new Republic, in which the glamour of a monarchic past was already beginning to be remembered. Another reason for the great success of this book was that the Germans themselves had not been able to travel for nearly five years, and few nations travel with greater enthusiasm than the German. Their love for travel is composed of a strong 'Wissenshunger', a thirst for knowledge, a romantic idealization of the Far-away, and the worship of everything foreign, no matter whether it be the columns of a Greek temple or the pattern of a Scottish tweed. The German frontiers had remained more or less closed since 1914, and travelling abroad was becoming a luxury that only the very rich could afford. The exotic atmosphere of the *Travel Diary*, with its descriptions of remote countries, supplied at the time a very real need among a people thirsting for travel. You could not enter a drawing-room without noticing on a table the two volumes of the *Diary*, bound in black cloth.

I, too, read the book, and felt stimulated by its sparkling thoughts and daring conclusions. The author's dogmatic pronouncements and his repeated contradictions antagonized and irritated me; but there were enough new and surprising aspects of the spiritual to excite the curiosity of any student of spiritual truth.

I decided to join the 'School of Wisdom'.

III

Count Hermann Keyserling came from one of those Russo-German families which lived on the Baltic between East Prussia and Finland. Most of them were Russian citizens and spoke German with a Slav accent. Count Hermann's grandfather was an intimate friend of Bismarck, and there were family connections with Immanuel Kant and Johann Sebastian Bach. A relationship of a different kind

brought Tartar blood into the family: Count Alexander, the friend of Bismarck, married a Countess Cancrin whose mother, a Mouravieff, had Tartar blood in her veins.

Hermann Keyserling was born on the family estate of Konno in 1880. He was given a very strict and secluded 'aristocratic' education by private tutors. He hardly mixed with other boys till, after the death of his father, he was sent at the age of fifteen to a school at Pernau. He studied at the University of Dorpat; but the boisterous life of youthful excesses was cut short by a duel in which Count Hermann was seriously wounded. Keyserling himself tells us that this experience turned him from an easy-going student into a pure intellectual; and certainly he soon left Dorpat to take up more serious pursuits at Heidelberg, where he plunged into the study of natural science. Keyserling was not altogether satisfied with his study of biology nor indeed with that of philosophy. His outlook was finally shaped by Houston Stewart Chamberlain, a writer who had a fundamental influence also on Adolf Hitler and his Baltic 'Kultur-Diktator', Alfred Rosenberg. Keyserling came under the spell of Chamberlain's *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, a book in the origins of which Richard Wagner, a pseudo-mysticism, an English upbringing, and a fanatical devotion to the Teutonic spirit of Bismarckian Germany, played equally important parts. Chamberlain, who had married one of the daughters of Richard Wagner, was then living in Vienna, and in order to be near him, Keyserling went there to study. He lived from 1901 till 1903 in Vienna, where the influence of Chamberlain and the Viennese 'mystic' Rudolph Kassner moulded him into an aesthete, an 'inactive dilettante'.

The following ten years were spent mainly between Paris, Berlin and London; and the social life of these capitals of Edwardian Europe played in Keyserling's life as important a part as private studies, reading and preoccupation with the arts. The Paris and London of those years must have been fairly full of young gentlemen with impressive bank balances, undefined spiritual ambitions and social pursuits. Slowly, however, Kant, Schopenhauer and Flaubert replaced Mr Chamberlain in Count Hermann's esteem; and this inner readjustment, together with a great personal disappointment, was responsible for Keyserling's first philosophical book, *Das Gefüge der Welt* ('The World in the Making').

In 1905, after the Russian Revolution, Keyserling believed he had lost his fortune. By 1908, however, the fortune was restored and he could settle down on the estate Raijkull, 'dividing his time between his literary activities and the life of a Russian agricultural nobleman'. In 1911 Keyserling set out on the momentous journey round the

world which was the material for his *Travel Diary*. He took a year to complete the journey, and he worked on his diary till the beginning of the war. He was not able to join the Russian army during the war on account of his old wound, and these years were spent at Raijkull, in 'the writing and rewriting of his book', while he drowned 'his profound disillusion and discouragement in the depths of self-analysis and spiritual self-control'.

The 1917 Revolution finally deprived Keyserling of his property, and when in 1918 he moved to Berlin he was entirely dependent upon the results of his intellectual labours. A year later he married a granddaughter of Bismarck, Countess Goedela von Bismarck.

IV

Though the name of the magic carpet on which Count Hermann Keyserling journeyed from obscurity to fame was, almost symbolically, *Travel Diary of a Philosopher*, this book was by no means his first essay in literature. It was preceded by several geological monographs, and one or two philosophical books.

It was not till 1919 that the success with the *Travel Diary* enabled Keyserling to found his own academy.

By 1922 the 'School of Wisdom' had achieved such fame that people throughout Europe were asking themselves what exactly it stood for. It was the continuation of a Philosophical Society formed a couple of years earlier by Keyserling and sponsored by the former Grand Duke of Hesse, Ernst Ludwig. Intellectual young Germans flocked to Darmstadt; yet, as will be seen later, it was not so much they who were responsible for the most striking aspect of the new movement; it was rather the more conspicuous social world that descended upon the quiet town in south-western Germany. For, though there was a constant nucleus of activities in Darmstadt, these did not reach their climax until the one or two yearly congresses, called 'Tagungen'. A Tagung lasted a week, and was attended by hundreds of people from all over the world. Officially it consisted of lectures.

For Keyserling the school was to be 'a radiator of spiritual influence with no institutional character but with international membership'. This was absolutely in keeping with his ideas about himself. He did not look upon himself as a scholar but as the 'apostle of a new spiritual era'. The fundamental idea of the school was 'to deepen a man's nature, to readjust his intellectual point of view', and it aimed at showing its pupils 'the eternal beyond the temporal'.

Keyserling was eager to create an élite that, by its higher intellectual and moral standards, would set a potent example to the

people at large. It was due to this conception that Keyserling had an exaggerated opinion of English life and of the English idea of the gentleman. When asked about the aims of the school, he answered that it was 'an organism for transferring rhythm'. Friendship, discussion, meditation were among the means for this 'rhythmical transference'.

It may be that Keyserling's ideas were not academic enough for his German followers, accustomed to a more systematic method of education. It may be that the versatility of his intellect bewildered people used to more comfortable methods of education. Whatever the reason, it was obvious to me that the school as it actually presented itself during the Tagung hardly corresponded to its creator's high ideals.

It was not difficult to guess what prompted many members to come to the Tagung. The few hotels in the town were packed, and at breakfast one imagined oneself sitting in an hotel *de luxe* in a fashionable spa rather than in the modest hotel of a sleepy provincial town. Certainly, during breakfast the names of Buddha, Plato and Laotse formed the centre of most conversations; but they were manipulated as though they belonged to social celebrities of the moment.

Most of the morning was given up to lectures. I was impressed by the names of the lecturers, whose addresses invariably maintained the expected standard. The lectures illustrated Keyserling's ideas with examples of Eastern and Western wisdom. Among the lecturers was the German sinologist, Richard Wilhelm, a man who had spent thirty years of his life in China and who had translated some of the profoundest Chinese thought into German. There was an impressive German Rabbi, Leo Beck, whose presence at this gathering showed that the organizers had been anxious not to give any signs of racial or religious prejudices. There was Leopold Ziegler, a man with a searching mind. But no speaker was more stimulating than Keyserling himself, who delivered a lecture almost every day, and who acted as an, at times, impatient and autocratic 'spiritus rector' of the whole congress.

Platform and audience, however, seemed far apart, and the rays cast from the one illumined the other but rarely.

Though the passionate personality of Keyserling focused the general attention—at times even during the lectures of others—it was mainly two white chairs covered with red silk that exercised a magnetic influence over the eyes, and presumably the minds, of many

members of the audience. They occupied the centre of the front row, and they were almost more responsible for the atmosphere during the Tagung than anyone or anything else. They were the seats of Ernst Ludwig and his consort.

In becoming the patron of Keyserling, Ernst Ludwig, the former ruler of Hesse, the grandson of Queen Victoria, the brother of the Russian Empress, the nephew, cousin or uncle of most of the crowned or ex-crowned heads of Europe, continued the policy which he had been pursuing even in the days before the war. Though he was no longer the ruler of his country, he still lived in his palace, situated in a distinguished residential street in Darmstadt. His cousin, the Emperor William II, is reported to have remarked one day that, though Ernst Ludwig was his best friend, he was undoubtedly his worst soldier. Yet even now the Grand Duke was more popular with the citizens of the Hessian Republic than his cousin at Doorn had ever been with the citizens of his Empire. The Grand Duke was a dilettante *par excellence:* he painted pictures, made beautiful embroideries, wrote poems and dramas of much feeling; he encouraged new artists to come to work in Darmstadt; he was an amusing conversationalist and an altogether delightful personality. He was also deeply interested in mysticism. It must have been attractive to this alert and intelligent man to become the patron of a philosopher who might one day develop into the spiritual teacher of a new Germany. On the horizon of Ernst Ludwig's mind there may have appeared the vision of another Grand Duke: Karl August of Weimar and his protégé Johann Wolfgang Goethe.

The Grand Duke never missed a lecture and, considering the time of the year and the excessive heat, this alone was an achievement. Though he was now only a private individual, the consciousness of royal presence and the atmosphere of Court could hardly have been stronger in pre-war days. The people, who before a lecture had been sitting about chatting, would jump up from their seats like soldiers the moment the ducal couple appeared in the doorway. The Grand Duchess, by birth a member of one of the smaller princely families, was a shy lady, kind and rather self-conscious. She used to arrive with ropes of pearls falling down to her knees, but on her face was the homely expression of a typical *Hausfrau.* The ducal couple walked slowly along the path between the chairs. All eyes followed them, and nobody uttered a word. Here and there they would smile at people they knew. The Grand Duke liked stopping between the rows, making jokes to friends, and he approached the silk-covered chairs with the easy elegance of a man who is used to making his entry under the rapt eyes of hundreds of spectators. Only after the

Grand Duke and his wife had taken their seats would the rest of the audience sit down.

VI

The Grand Duke and his consort were only partly, and in fact passively, responsible for the courtly atmosphere during the Tagung. This was created far more by the ladies and gentlemen who often by their very clothes distinguished themselves in this philosophical gathering. The men wore dark suits and stiff collars the excessive height of which presumably corresponded to their own elevated position. The dresses of their wives and daughters had an old-fashioned correctness which brought visions of courtly procedure and well-studied ceremonial. They were ladies and gentlemen formerly connected with the Court in official or private capacities, but now left stranded and forlorn. They seemed, however, eager to follow their former master even in his spiritual footsteps, and so they spent long mornings and afternoons fighting bravely against the heat and the boredom of lectures. Beads of perspiration would appear on their faces, and their heads would droop like those of weary travellers journeying through a hot summer night in a third-class carriage.

There was apparently some logic in the presence of so many members of the aristocracy. The Grand Duke was only one, and the less important, reason for their enthusiasm for philosophy. More important was the presence of Count Keyserling himself. Though intensely intellectual and only half German, Hermann Keyserling was a member of their caste. In his autocratic and self-centred mind over and over again he displayed his social origin. While for the time being the German aristocracy as a whole had lost its influence, Keyserling the aristocrat was increasing his power as an individual. He was becoming a vital force, and attained to his position without sacrificing his aristocratic attitude or trying to flatter the new régime. This was bound to impress the old but powerless aristocracy, even though many members of it disapproved of Keyserling's advanced ideas, and called him the 'Socialist' or the 'Red Count'. It was very important, however, to most of them that Keyserling seemed to be creating a new aristocracy: a new caste in which their own ancient traditions would be invigorated by his spiritual reform. For the old nobility there must have been something very satisfactory in the promise of a new aristocratic order, essentially German, which was likely to carry its influence far beyond the frontiers of a diminished Fatherland.

The aristocratic world contrasted in appearance somewhat with the sophisticated air of a number of visitors, mainly women, from

Berlin, Vienna and other capitals. There were also a few Americans for whom the combination of philosophy and royalty must have been irresistible. It was this world that was most visible during the whole Tagung. It would have been pleasant to meet some of these often cultured people had one arrived in Darmstadt for entertainment. It was, however, disappointing to young enthusiasts who, like myself, had not come to Darmstadt for that purpose, but to be enlightened, uplifted or at least instructed.

I realized on the first day that it would not be easy to find answers to the various questions a great many of the younger generation were asking themselves. We wanted an indication as to a right way of thinking, a right discipline of feeling. Some of us had indefinite ideas on the necessity of celibacy. We had all dabbled in Yoga and similar exercises, but we were vague about them; we pretended that we knew more than we actually did, and we hoped that someone would give us clear rules. Meditations were held for a certain group of people; but meditations held collectively on hot summer days and in the courtly atmosphere seemed even to my inexperienced mind unconvincing. Somehow it was impossible to break through the courtly apparatus of the Tagung.

Nevertheless there was one piece of advice which remained alive long after the Tagung was forgotten—that it was not the things and the ideas in themselves that had to be changed but the accents we put on them. One day I asked Keyserling what he really meant by this phrase. The answer must have been so omnipresent in his mind that, even without stopping in his walk, and without looking at me, he answered: 'We cannot solve problems by destroying them or by working them out in elaborate systems, but merely by re-ordering their accents, by robbing them of their former weight. If we begin to neglect a problem, minimizing its previous importance, it will begin to disappear from our consciousness; it will soon die and thus solve itself.' The conversation of no one else gave me so strongly the impression of written rather than spoken words: it was as though the mouth could not follow the tremendous pace of the brain and was forced to leave the words only half finished; they were thrown into the listener's ear at a bewildering speed, and they left behind the vision of a quite uncommon nervous energy.

VII

There was no means of escaping the atmosphere of the provincial court. In pre-war days this courtly character must have been delightful. Now, deprived of its significance, and placed in the midst of a philosophical gathering, it had become quite irrelevant. The social

interludes, which were meant to establish the contacts of one with another on a basis of deeper understanding, were in keeping with the general character of the Tagung. Keyserling had been right when he had planned these social gatherings. Unfortunately a great many of the members put the accent on the outer framework only. Most conversations deteriorated into gossip, and ended generally with some remarks about the wife of a powerful banker from Berlin. The ladies taking part in a conversation would suddenly find it shocking that the banker's wife appeared three times a day in different clothes and, what is more, in clothes that had obviously come from Paris. One's own mental accent became so focused on the lady from Berlin that on the third morning even I could not help my attention wandering in an effort to locate the lady and verify these accusations.

One night we were asked to a party by a very rich nobleman whose house was famous for its magnificent collection of works of art. It was a rare occasion, and I was grateful for the opportunity of seeing a masterpiece by Van Eyck and a number of hardly less famous pictures and statues placed in perfect surroundings. I expected to find great eagerness on the part of the other members of the Tagung. With very few exceptions, however, they were entirely absorbed in watching the arrival of the Grand Duke and his wife, whose backs they had been admiring for an almost unlimited number of hours in the last few days. And when the handsome wife of the banker from Berlin arrived with ropes of pearls more magnificent than those of the Grand Duchess, the topic of conversation seemed decided for the remainder of the evening.

The picture of the Tagung would be incomplete without the mention of an occasion at which Keyserling's ideal combination of social intercourse and spiritual stimulation was to be realized at last. It was the visit of the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore, whose European fame had just reached its zenith. In Germany he was considered one of the greatest poets of the age. In honour of Tagore the Grand Duke issued invitations to a garden party in his hunting castle outside Darmstadt. It was a hot sunny day, and the invitation was accepted with enthusiasm. After a lovely walk through the old park, we had tea in the castle.

After tea we went into the neighbouring fields, and grouped ourselves on the slope of a hill, on the top of which stood Keyserling and Tagore. Their dark silhouettes were sharp against the pale gold of a perfect summer sky. The Indian poet was wearing long silk robes, and the wind played with his white hair and his long beard. He began to recite some of his poems in English. Though the

majority of the listeners hardly understood more than a few words—it was only a few years after the war, and the knowledge of English was still very limited—the flush on their cheeks showed that the presence of the poet from the East represented to them the climax of the whole week. There was music in Tagore's voice, and it was a pleasure to listen to the Eastern melody in the words. The hill and the fields, the poet, the Grand Duke and the many royal and imperial princes, Keyserling and all the philosophers and philistines were bathed in the glow of the evening sun. It was a very striking picture.

CHAPTER II

Episodes in Modern Life: Stefan George and Bô Yin Râ

I HAD not a scholar's interest in metaphysical subjects, and yet I was asking myself constantly the same questions that most young people around me seemed to be asking themselves, and to which our ordinary knowledge could supply no satisfactory answers. Was our earthly life a complete whole or was it merely a stage in a much longer journey? Was the belief in *karma*[1] and in reincarnation more satisfactory than that in the Paradise and Purgatory of the Christian Church? Were our actions the free expressions of our free will or merely the results of habit and education? Ought we to follow the conventional ethics of our day or try to discover ethics that might have a more spiritual significance?

Acquaintances who had hitherto appeared materialistic in outlook suddenly seemed animated by the same spiritual urge.

One day during conversation at lunch in the house of a woman whom I considered fairly frivolous I happened to use one of those silly adjectives, fashionable at the moment, such as 'heavenly' or 'incredible'. My hostess interrupted me suddenly, and said in a low voice so that nobody else could hear: 'You should not use words

[1] *Karma*—conditions into which man is born as the result of his good and bad deeds during his former life on earth.

that you cannot possibly mean. I am sure you know that words have a deeper meaning in themselves than the one which we thoughtlessly give them'. Her remark was the beginning of a deep friendship which was cut short only by her death. In the few years of our friendship I discovered that her own, at times extremely successful, way of getting at the root of things consisted in always trying to avoid the use of words in their wrong sense. She was always anxious to remember that a word is both a symbol and a centre of spiritual power in itself. I began to watch myself and to be careful in the use of adjectives; the 'most incredible' and 'heavenly' were eliminated from my vocabulary. I no longer answered invitations by saying, 'I shall simply adore' to come. I noticed that the feminine fashion of the exaggerated use of adjectives—and not only of adjectives—was not confined to the younger, frivolous set, but was equally popular with older and more serious people.

In the following weeks, during which I was beginning to treat words with some of the respect due to them, problems appeared simpler, and I seemed to see them in their right proportions. It was as though I were becoming more honest.

II

It can hardly have been an accident that I came across the work of Stefan George exactly at a moment when some of the lesser mysteries of life were beginning to reveal themselves to me through the medium of words. While I was staying in Germany, a friend gave me for Christmas a book of poems by George. The cover, with its Gothic character was self-conscious, the type and setting reminiscent of William Morris; there was no punctuation, and the use of capital letters was arbitrary. These details made reading in a foreign language difficult. In former days I should merely have skipped through the decorative pages: in my present state I was absorbed from the very beginning; the poems impressed me so deeply that I bought George's other four volumes; and I spent weeks in a state of exhilarated study of George's poetry.

I was beginning to understand why George was so much admired, nay worshipped, by some of the most serious-minded Germans. They approached the poet in a spirit of almost mystical veneration.

Stefan George, the descendant of peasants from Lorraine, the son of an innkeeper in the Rhenish vineland, had been living for years in an impenetrable seclusion. Yet the critics called him an aesthete and a highbrow; and indeed there was little doubt that in his earlier days he had exhibited a certain artistic precocity. An

apocryphal story was told of George at a big dinner, sitting behind a screen so as not to be seen by the other guests, and consuming during the meal not more than three grapes. Gossip was circulated because hardly anyone knew or had ever seen George; in no directory was his address or even the district in which he lived to be found; he never subscribed to any popular movements; he did not belong to any literary school; he had always worked in a personal and independent way—but the number of his admirers grew from day to day, and almost against his will.

George was a poet and nothing else. He did not try to be either critic, dramatist, journalist or politician. He followed only the commands of his art, which he kept free from all alien elements. He considered that his mission as a poet was that which is open to none but the poet: that is to uncover truths, to disseminate wisdom and to create beauty. This accounts perhaps for the prophetic quality of many of his poems and for his influence upon the more serious-minded sections of German youth. And yet neither the subject matter nor the form of his poems was modern. They contained, side by side, pagan sensuousness and classic severity of tone, and they glittered with a richness of texture that induced superficial readers to call him an aesthete. No one since Goethe had possessed such a mastery of the German language; nor had any other German poet created more magnificent new words. His words always seemed to give the only possible picture of that 'higher reality' that before him had been known under many different names.

Young Germany was finding in his poems a truth that had hitherto been but dimly apprehended, and a stern, manly beauty that contrasted strongly with the life around. The irretrievable past had not been replaced by a satisfactory present, and the lost war had left behind a deep bitterness. The result was the growth among some of the young men of a vague internationalism which, rarely creative, was in the main limited to criticism and retrospect. Under George's influence such positive values as 'friendship', 'earth', 'homeland', became desirable once again.

The small group of people who belonged to George's immediate circle exercised a far wider influence than seemed justified by their very limited number. They held no office; their names practically never appeared in the newspapers; they were hardly ever heard of at international congresses. Nevertheless, they had a growing influence. A few of them, such as Friedrich Gundolf, the professor of literature at the University of Heidelberg, or E. Kantorowicz, lectured, and thus influenced youth directly. Others such as the critics, poets and historians, Karl Wolfskehl, Friedrich Wolters,

Lugwig Klages, Berthold Vallentin, Ernst Bertram, were felt through their writings and their personal contacts.

George received but a very few people into his immediate circle, but having once accepted a disciple, he shaped, not only his intellect but his whole character. He was, for all his artistic elusiveness, not a mere dreamer, and his influence touched all practical sides of life. His chief claim to fame rested on his purification and enrichment of the German language. Experts regarded this work as of an almost magical significance. Yet it was not George's poetry alone that impressed the Germans so deeply: it was also his inner attitude that can only be described by the German word *Haltung*. George's attitude of proud seclusion, of silence, of loyalty and devotion to his ideals, of avoidance of publicity, of a stern responsibility towards his work—in short, the whole magnitude of his *Haltung*—impressed the Germans as something truly superior. For forty years they had heard about the uncompromising poet from Bingen on the Rhine, who had never given an interview; who had never appeared on any public platform; who had never published an article in a newspaper; who had never accepted the titles or the invitations of an academy, a university or a government; and whose Dantesque face seemed the very symbol of an inner strength and of a pre-eminent *Haltung*.

For many of the younger men George had become a sort of ever-present conscience urging them to live up to his high standards. Though only very few knew him; though by his very seclusion and distance from ordinary life he had become to his followers almost an abstract power, his purifying and dignifying influence was stronger than that of those men they had been taught to admire. It is but rare in modern life that spiritual influence becomes real without personal contact, and merely through the power of the word and the *Haltung* of the teacher.

III

The purifying influence which had unexpectedly come through the casual remark at luncheon, and the acquaintance with Stefan George which followed, were only two of various events which pushed me along new paths.

The editor of a newspaper on which I worked as an art critic one day handed me a slender volume, bound in paper, and asked me whether I would care to write a review of it. He thought I might be interested in 'that sort of thing'. One or two other people in the editorial office had refused to write the review, and the editor himself felt that he could not deal with it. The book had been sent personally to the editor by its author, Felix Weingartner, the celebrated com-

poser and conductor. The editor had a greater admiration for Weingartner's musical gifts than for his spiritual and literary activities, which left him slightly bewildered. The book was called *Bô Yin Râ*, and I took it home to read.

The three syllables Bô Yin Râ meant nothing to me at the time, but Weingartner's name was a guarantee that some quality might be expected. The book contained the story of the conversion to a new creed of one of the most distinguished musicians of the day, together with an enthusiastic account of that creed and of its founder, hidden behind the exotic name Bô Yin Râ. Even before I had finished the book I knew that I should not forget it easily, and I bought several of Bô Yin Râ's own books. Instead of writing the usual notice I asked the editor if I might write a review of four columns, though even that length I thought at the time inadequate, and I was therefore not surprised when within a year after I had first come across the name of Bô Yin Râ I learned that his books had become best-sellers.

Most people were intrigued by the exotic name, while others were puzzled by the semi-mystical and very modern pictures with which some of the books were illustrated. It was plain from these pictures that the author was also a painter of some distinction. It was impossible to verify who he was, and though Felix Weingartner wrote to me at great length he would not disclose anything about the identify of his hero.

There was no school, church or movement that bore the name of Bô Yin Râ. His message was contained in his little books, read with eagerness by thousands. *The Book of the Living God, The Secret, The Book of Man*—all of them were variations on a theme. They were meeting more than halfway the spiritual needs of people eager to forget the misery of daily life.

Bô Yin Râ's gospel might not have been accepted so willingly had it not contained various statements that suggested in his case the possession of esoteric knowledge. The promise or even the possibility of such knowledge never fails to interest people. The more serious student hopes to find in it the core of certain teachings, hidden from the layman but apparently in existence since time immemorial; in the masses it evokes visions of supernatural power. Bô Yin Râ claimed that his store of knowledge came from the most ancient wisdom. In several publications he was referred to as a 'Master', and he was supposed to be in constant spiritual communication with certain other 'Masters' who transmitted their secret knowledge to him. These 'Masters' were referred to as 'Sages of the East' or the 'Inner Helpers'.

Though it was impossible at the time to understand fully what all such claims entailed, Bô Yin Râ seemed an honest man who believed in the truth of his statements.

His teaching was neither new nor startling, but it contained certain fundamental truths. Its main thesis was that we can find true and lasting happiness only within ourselves, and that we must abandon the search for it in the world without. The moment we begin to listen with greater attention to ourselves we uncover those spiritual powers that create happiness. Although happiness was a definite command in Bô Yin Râ's doctrine, he did not base it on any asceticism or self-denial, but on a sensible and deliberate acceptance of life, an honest and decent living and on the absolute elimination of fear.

Bô Yin Râ did not consider himself a new prophet or messiah, but the 'mediator' between higher powers and man, who cannot find happiness in life. His object was not to persuade people but merely to stimulate those faculties in them that are needed for the establishment of an inner harmony.

Bô Yin Râ's success was not surprising. In an existence with little material security and with just as little hope for immediate improvement, his gospel was bound to find many adherents. Most of the other new gods—Freud with his sublimations and complexes, Keyserling with his 'sense of life' and 'replacement of accents', Einstein with his incomprehensible relativity, Spengler with his intellectual pessimism, George with his poetic visions, Steiner with his startling scientific perceptions—could not be enjoyed without intellectual preparation. Bô Yin Râ was easy to understand. The style of his books was almost that of books for children; no religious or intellectual conversion was required; his kind of happiness could be achieved by the rich and by the poor. Above all, he appealed to the emotions.

It did not come as a surprise to me when I found out later that Bô Yin Râ was a Bavarian painter with the prosaic name of Joseph Schneiderfranken. He was born in 1876 at Aschaffenburg in Bavaria. After various manual occupations he found the means to study painting in Munich and Paris. He lived for a while in Greece, married, became the head of a large family, and settled down in Switzerland. He did not begin writing till he was forty, and he based his whole teaching solely on personal experience without any relation to existing doctrines or religions. He claimed that the name by which he became known was not arbitrary, but that it was given to him by his 'Masters' for reasons connected with its esoteric meaning.

Though the majority of his admirers suspected behind his name a

rather mysterious personality, they responded in the first instance to the honest and unsophisticated ring in his words. Even in his appearance Bô Yin Râ inspired confidence. He was big and heavy, rather rough cut, of peasant features and yet of gentle expression. One easily believed that he loved few things better than climbing mountains, planting trees in his garden, or performing manual work.

In the artificial, hectic life of post-war Germany the simple message of Bô Yin Râ was like a refreshing breeze. It satisfied certain emotions that had not found realization in any of the other creeds. We all have a first awakening in life when we turn away from our youthful egotism and feel the desire to be decent and unselfish, to help others and to create harmony within. Bô Yin Râ appealed to those instincts.

But such instincts soon lose their power if the foundations of the message that satisfies them are solely emotional. After a period of enthusiasm I felt, like many others, that Bô Yin Râ's doctrine was of too general a kind and that it did not satisfy the intellectual needs. An inner transformation that touches the emotions without affecting the intellect cannot last.

Nevertheless I was grateful for the laziness of my colleagues which brought me into touch with the Bavarian peasant-painter Bô Yin Râ.

IV

And this is the last incident. A friend who was the legal adviser of an old mercantile firm asked me one day to come over to Hamburg, where he lived, to advise him on the production of a new monthly review which his firm had decided to publish. I thought there was some misunderstanding: I could hardly imagine myself the right person for a job that would require knowledge of finance and economics.

Nevertheless on the following Saturday I took the train to Hamburg, and by lunch time I was sitting between my friend and the owner of the firm. Before long I realized that the review was to be dedicated to 'cultural, literary and artistic matters', and that I was to become one of the three editors. The task seemed interesting and I accepted the offer.

After two numbers of the review had appeared, its owner decided that it could not fulfil its purpose in its present form. It was meant to appeal to serious-minded people, who had grown tired of the usual academic and literary monthly publications produced mainly to satisfy the vanity of their contributors and editors. The review had therefore deliberately to deal even with those subjects that most people still called supernatural, and the proprietor considered that

the right treatment of these matters might disclose more truth than had the conventional methods hitherto employed.

An exciting correspondence now began with new collaborators, and the review came to include articles about the supposedly serious side of graphology and astrology, symbolism in ancient art, the relationship between religion and language; it also published fiction in which the invisible background of life was seriously treated. As far as editorship was concerned, we were all amateurs; the review was amateurish, and it changed its face almost from number to number. Most of our decisions as to the contents were based on guesses, and yet the review's circulation grew with each month; and though it received much abuse, it inspired some praise from unexpected quarters.

It is only today that I comprehend why we introduced supernatural matter into the review. The obvious reason was, of course, the apparent demand of our readers. The main reason had a more selfish origin, for the three of us felt that we could come nearer to grasping truth only if we were forced to deal with certain problems in a more serious manner than we had done before. The new professional responsibilities forced us to order, read, accept, refuse and at times even write articles on subjects that dealt more with the background than with the obvious things of life, with hidden rather than with visible connections. Our professional preoccupation with these subjects disclosed certain truths that had hitherto been hidden from us.

At first the many employees of the firm looked at the new attempt of their 'boss' with bewilderment. At the end of a few months most of them read the review. Many of them approached the editors with questions which showed how deeply interested they were in the problems with which it dealt.

The experiences recorded in this chapter were nothing more than minor episodes. Nevertheless they suggested to me that even an apparently insignificant event has its meaning, and that it may help us to perceive truth no less than do the major events of our lives. Each experience opens up a new path, just as each teacher acts as a new stimulus.

CHAPTER III

Occult Truth: Rudolf Steiner

ONE day, after World War One, a German told me a most unusual story. He had been suffering from a rather exceptional ailment of which he had only quite recently been cured. His affliction was a form of second sight which operated in one particular direction. Baron V. was the descendant of an old family, was a scholar, and a traveller. He had been a member of a flying corps on the Western Front, and every time his colleagues were ordered on a flight Baron V. could foresee exactly who would return and who would be killed. On several of these occasions he communicated his forebodings to his superior officers, and each time his presentiment was borne out by the event. Baron V.'s situation became unbearable: the nervous strain produced by this gift of prophecy increased to an alarming extent, and he anticipated a breakdown. He decided that if he were to stay in the service he must rid himself of his fatal talent. He wrote to a friend at home and was advised to see an Austrian, a certain Dr Rudolph Steiner, who lived in Berlin, and who was said to possess extraordinary powers.

Dr Steiner was the leader of a movement known as Anthroposophy, and was reported to be a man of learning and scholarship. Though Baron V. had become rather sceptical, he was feeling so worried that he telegraphed to Dr Steiner, and two days later he called at the latter's flat where he was shown without delay into a big sitting-room. In his frock coat and large black bow tie Dr Steiner suggested both a scholar and a poet; his face with its deep-set eyes was expressive, but his manner was simple and quiet. A faint and pleasant accent betrayed his Austrian origin. He gave Baron V. no promises, but he advised him to practise certain mental exercises which he thought would be helpful.

Baron V. had never read any of Dr Steiner's publications, but he left Berlin with a suitcase filled with them, and read some of them on his way to the front. Though they seemed less simple than the manner of their author had led him to expect, Baron V. was struck by their logic and their scientific precision, and it appeared to him that they were distinguished by these attributes from the generality

of writings on occult subjects. Baron V. began the mental exercises immediately, and after a short time his second sight disappeared.

Had Baron V. remained only a casual acquaintance, whose trustworthiness had not been tested, I might have considered this story apocryphal. In repeated contacts stretching over several years, however, I have never found any reason to doubt his truthfulness.

II

When I visited Germany after the war, it was almost impossible not to hear the name of Rudolf Steiner. Violent attacks and 'revelations' were appearing in many newspapers—not concerned with scholarly subjects but with politics. The commonest accusations held Rudolf Steiner responsible for one of the biggest German defeats, and thus for the death of thousands of soldiers. I found it by no means easy to find my way through this labyrinth of statements and counter-statements.

What was the crime that put the scientist and scholar Rudolf Steiner into the very centre of a military-political battle? Jules Sauerwein, the distinguished editor of the Paris *Matin*, summed up these accusations when he began an interview with Steiner with the following words: 'Do you know that your enemies say that, if it had not been for you, neither the German Chief of Staff nor the German Headquarters would have lost their heads and consequently the Battle of the Marne?'

Steiner had indeed been on terms of intimate friendship with Frau von Moltke, the wife of General von Moltke, the German Chief of Staff. He did not know the general intimately, and yet he was accused of having influenced Moltke's decisions in the first weeks of the war, and was thus made responsible by many people for the overwhelming defeat of the German armies. The accusers spread legends that he had exercised his influence over Moltke and Frau von Moltke through mediums and in even more sinister ways. As both Moltke and his wife admitted that they had the highest regard for Steiner, the stories about his influence over them were believed even in responsible quarters. The truth became known only later, when Moltke's *Memoirs* appeared and when, after the collapse of the German Reich, Steiner felt entitled to publish all the evidence of his connection with Moltke. Only then was it realized that Steiner had not seen Moltke during the preparations for the Battle of the Marne, and that the two men never spoke of purely military matters. The truth was that the Emperor William in one of his irresponsible moods withdrew his confidence from Moltke, and that the Chief of Staff was left in bewildering uncertainty as to his own position. In her

anxiety Frau von Moltke begged Steiner to go and see her husband, who felt the necessity of some spiritual comfort. Steiner went to Coblenz to see Moltke, and the two men spent several hours in a philosophical conversation. This meeting became known. No officer in the German Army liked the idea of the Chief of Staff spending important hours in conversation with a mystic-philosopher, and the fact that he had done so was in itself sufficient to provide the calumniators with their material.

These attacks were almost all the news of Steiner that I could glean from the daily press. Yet the newspapers were no longer the only source of information. Though my interest in Steiner was still detached, I met more and more people who knew, or were studying, Steiner's teachings. His followers seemed to belong to nearly all professions: there were engineers, doctors, artists, journalists, business men, theologians. Whilst the followers whom I had met at the 'School of Wisdom' at Darmstadt had treated spiritual matters as a topic of sophisticated conversation, the followers of Steiner were serious, and many of them seemed experts in the most varied subjects. While the majority of Keyserling's followers seemed to have read only his *Travel Diary*, the majority of the people whom I met in connection with anthroposophy appeared to have read a great many of the more difficult of Steiner's books.

Steiner's teaching was evidently the most widespread and, by the quality of its followers, the most important of its kind on the Continent.

III

Rudolf Steiner was born in 1861 at Kraljevic, a small town within the Habsburg Monarchy on the frontier of Hungary and Croatia. His father had formerly been in the employment of a Count Hoyos, but had afterwards become stationmaster at a small provincial station. The boy spent his childhood not only in the fields and woods near the railway line but also in everyday contact with such realities as trains, timetables, and the mechanics of earlier telegraphy. At first he was educated partly by his father, partly at the local 'Real Schule', which meant that mathematics and the sciences were emphasized much more than the classics.

From his earliest days the boy was given up to the contemplation and enjoyment of inner sensations as much as to external pleasures, and he was trying to understand the background of life through a fuller knowledge of nature. He was gaining that knowledge through the usual channels and through a form of observation which in later years he was able to diagnose as second sight. The boy felt dimly

that it was not 'normal' to view the world in such a way, and he tried to fight against his visions. The study of mathematics reassured him, however, for in geometry he experienced for the first time the existence of a real world which is not visible to the bodily eye. The triangle he learned about in geometry was not a particular triangle that he himself might draw but the essence of all triangles. This ideal triangle could be seen with the 'inner eye', but could not be reproduced, and this spiritual image of a geometrical figure convinced the boy that it was not wrong to 'see' things which are not visible to our physical sight.

On leaving school, he began to study at the University of Vienna, but as his parents were too poor to help him he had to support himself by giving lessons. In later years, he was grateful for this necessity. As it happened, most of his pupils had to be trained in classics; and Steiner, who was studying natural sciences and mathematics, was forced to go through the whole of a classical education. Through an accidental meeting with an expert on Goethe he stepped into the world of literature and philosophy, and these subjects were added to mathematics and the sciences. During his years in Vienna, he seldom worked for fewer than fifteen hours a day; and he trained himself to do with only a few hours' sleep.

Even after he had taken his degree, Steiner went on studying, earning his living by giving lessons, writing articles in periodicals, and later on by giving lectures. His thorough scientific education and his preoccupation with Goethe enabled him to accept a commission for editing the latter's scientific works, and this subsequently procured him a much-coveted situation at the famous Goethe-Archive in Weimar, where he was put in charge of Goethe's scientific writings.

During these days an incident took place which was to leave a very deep impression on Steiner. This was his meeting with Nietzsche. Frau Foerster-Nietzsche, the philosopher's sister, invited Steiner to reorganize her brother's private library, and Steiner spent many weeks of absorbing work at the Nietzsche-Archive. This spiritual intimacy with Nietzsche culminated in the one and only meeting between the two men.

An understanding—if any—between them could only be achieved on a plane where material incidents play no part. Nietzsche's name was at that time one of the most famous in Europe, and Steiner entered Nietzsche's room in a state of intense excitement. A soft light was falling upon the man lying on a sofa. His eyes were wide open and he was staring at the visitor at the door. Steiner could see at a glance that the man with the vast forehead and the sad eyes

almost covered by thick eyebrows no longer beheld the world around him. Yet Steiner did not feel that he was confronted with a man who was, soon afterwards, to die insane. The picture of the resting giant who had abandoned the world of physical realities had moved Steiner deeply in more ways than one. Later he described his impression of that meeting in the words: 'His eyes were fixed upon me but they did not find me; their blankness seemed to rob my own eyes of their normal power of sight.' Steiner believed that now, released from the necessity of physical contact with Nietzsche, he could behold and meet him in a purely non-material world.

Already at the age of thirty-six Steiner had formed his conception of the universe. Spirit was for him not something outside nature, but within it. Man was the only being that could act, feel and think in full consciousness of what he was doing. But Steiner demanded from man that he should use these faculties to view the world not from an intellectual but from a spiritual centre. This would disclose the hidden powers that direct life. He never tried to approach those powers through unconscious trance or exaltation—the practice of most people possessing supernatural gifts. All visions obtained in occult experience had to be controlled by full consciousness, and Steiner was anxious that the connection between occult and our common experiences should be established in a purely objective way. Thus he was striving towards a knowledge that would be deeper than that offered by modern science.

Steiner's road to the final establishment of his knowledge led through an association with Theosophy when he became Secretary-General of the German section of the Theosophical Society. The theosophical idea of the reincarnation of the 'World Teacher', in the body of the young Indian boy Jiddu Krishnamurti, compelled Steiner in 1913 to adopt an antagonistic attitude that forced the Theosophical Society to expel him. In the eyes of Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater, as well as in those of most theosophists, Krishnamurti was to become the vehicle for a reincarnated Christ. For Steiner it was sinful to claim authority for anyone solely on the grounds of reincarnation. Besides, he believed that Christ could descend to earth only once and that the expectation of a 'second coming' of this kind was mistaken.

IV

When Steiner's association with the Theosophical Society ceased, the time came to establish his own doctrine—anthroposophy—as a separate teaching. This creed had for years been held by a distinct section of the German Theosophical Society. The word 'anthropo-

sophy' means 'wisdom under the aspect of man'. The name appeared for the first time in an English book of the sixteenth century by Thomas Maughan, but it seems that Steiner took it from a book by Immanuel Hermann Fichte, the son of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, the philosopher. In a short time the meagre beginnings developed into the vast Anthroposophical Society, with its thousands of members all over the world, and with activities ranging from purely occult and religious study to work in scientific laboratories and art studios.

Steiner's own activities were ever increasing. Besides giving lectures and teaching private pupils, he was not only preparing the establishment of headquarters for the society, but also writing plays and experimenting in various artistic media.

Steiner's leading idea was still that truth can best be proved through physical things. Though he demanded that ordinary experience be always transformed into an act of thought, he repudiated the usual method of abstract thought in which one becomes so absorbed by the object that one forgets that one is thinking. He wanted the thinker to remain conscious all the time of what he was doing. And he wanted man to think in 'pictures' instead of in abstractions.

Such a process can best be explained by a comparison with the ideas of Plato, who had the gift of 'seeing' the world in visions. The Greek genius did not separate the human soul from the cosmos, but conceived them as an organic whole. The images that were evoked during a vision were not thoughts but spiritual pictures called by a later period 'Platonic ideas'. It was only Aristotle who began to 'think' of the world, instead of 'seeing' it. While Plato was the great Greek 'seer', Aristotle was the 'thinker' of truth. Plato cared for truth as contained in spiritual ideas, whilst Aristotle was concerned with truth as expressed in the physical world. Steiner tried to combine their wisdom—by assimilating truth as a spiritual reality and by translating it afterwards into physical reality.

Though Steiner had a number of personal pupils, he never tried to impress upon them his individual knowledge, and he gave his personal opinions only when asked for them. At his lectures he spoke without notes. Generally he focused his attention on those listeners whom he could help in particular, and his whole lecture would be adjusted to those special requirements. During his busy life Steiner had been in touch with almost all classes of people. He had lectured to socialistic workmen and to members of the aristocracy; to the clergy and to scientists; he had been the friend of many leading German and Austrian philosophers and scientists, and he

never lost contact with everyday life. But both his new knowledge and his increasing power had left him free from worldly ambition.

Yet few people had so many enemies as Rudolf Steiner, and this becomes comprehensible when one recalls the revolutionary character of his teaching. He claimed to have a new and deeper understanding of the sciences and of religion than other men. Though his knowledge seemed at first unintelligible, most people who troubled to study anthroposophy accepted Steiner's views. Those who fought against him had never bothered to study his message, and they simply repeated the distorted versions of it that they read in newspapers.

Antagonism caused uneasiness to Steiner only in so far as the spreading of his doctrine was hindered thereby. His enemies accused him of spiritual fraud, or of being a Jesuit, or taunted him with being a converted Eastern Jew. His most private life, that of a very unselfish character, was defamed and, though he never spoke of it, he must have suffered deeply from so many malignant slanders.

To Steiner himself his unusual gifts were so much a part of his very nature that he no longer considered them in any way extraordinary, and his natural modesty was never affected by them. Once he foretold with uncanny precision an intimate detail in the private life of one of his friends, and when the prediction proved correct his friend exclaimed enthusiastically: 'It is really wonderful that you should see this.' 'Wonderful?' answered Steiner; 'you should not think of it like that; one may or may not see such things.'

One of the most reliable authorities to quote with regard to Steiner's strange powers is Dr Friedrich Rittelmeyer, a distinguished pre-war preacher in Berlin, and a man of profound scholarship. When at a mature age he came into touch with Steiner's teaching, he possessed all the equipment necessary for a study of it. Nevertheless he spent ten years studying anthroposophy before finally accepting it.

Rittelmeyer noticed how much Steiner's ease in using his occult gifts had grown in the course of time. 'In earlier years,' says Rittelmeyer, 'it seemed to me that, when Steiner was giving advice to people, he liked to sit where he would not be obliged to face the light. When he began to use his faculties of spiritual sight one noticed a certain deliberate adjustment of his being, often accompanied by a lowering of the eyes.... As the years went on I noticed this less and less, and finally not at all.... It was as if both states of consciousness, that of sense perception and of spiritual perception, were for him, freely and naturally, one beside the other.'

Humanity has always believed in clairvoyance. One of the most

characteristic examples of clairvoyance, or, rather, of one of its forms known as *mantics*, accepted and venerated as a divine gift, is to be found in the oracle of Delphi. The priestesses, called pythonesses, were women with clairvoyant gifts and, though even in the ancient days there were often cases of deliberate fraud, there were many examples of genuine visions and predictions of a clairvoyant kind. It was not only the masses who believed in the genuineness of the occult visions obtained by a pythoness. Even such thinkers as Pythagoras and Plato acknowledged the institution at Delphi, and considered the 'divine madness' (*furor divinus*) as the highest and most direct means of obtaining knowledge, and the logical and positive Aristotle admitted that there is a science of 'spiritual vision'.

Occultists believe in the existence of three different kinds of clairvoyance: hereditary, karmic and conscious. Hereditary clairvoyance is a gift inherited from our ancestors; karmic clairvoyance is said to be transmitted from our own previous incarnation. Though both are gifts handed down to the owner and not created by himself, karmic clairvoyance is supposedly consciously developed in a previous incarnation. The most important form of clairvoyance is that which is trained in our present life and in full consciousness.

Rudolf Steiner claimed, from the very beginning, to possess karmic clairvoyance. Certain incidents in his later life point to the fact that he may also have suspected the remains of an hereditary clairvoyance which we supposedly may possess without knowing it. The moment Steiner saw that the occult world was a scientific certainty to him, he strove towards the development of conscious clairvoyance. If he were to penetrate through material things into a spiritual Beyond merely because he possessed gifts he could not account for, he could not claim scientific justification for his results. Even the possibility of such a clairvoyance had to be eliminated.

Nothing is said to destroy such a gift so thoroughly as indulgence in alcohol, which leads man to a lower state of consciousness. Hence the drinking of wine was part of the ancient mysteries of which the aim was to disclose the next stage of human consciousness.

The consciousness of the Greeks was, according to others besides Steiner, of a dream-pictorial character. Life was 'seen' in pictures, of which Plato's 'ideas' are the most perfect expression. In the Christian era man's consciousness descended from the visionary to the intellectual. The Greeks could reach such a consciousness only in the mysteries. This difference of consciousness is best illustrated by the difference between Apollo and Dionysos. Apollo knows everything; Dionysos knows nothing, but is everything, and his actions speak for him. In the mysteries, the worshippers of Dionysos gave themselves

up to the enjoyment of wine and they thus descended to an intellectual and, therefore, earthly perception of the world. Thus the identification with Dionysos disclosed the coming stage of their evolution.

The first Greek who consciously perceived and acted on this was Aristotle. Without losing himself in the orgy of the mysteries, he found the means for an intellectual understanding of the world. He was able to represent the world not in visions and ideas but in thoughts. It was not surprising that the intensely intellectual scholasticism of the Middle Ages considered Aristotle one of the greatest men, if not the greatest, of all times.

Steiner believed that Jesus Christ did for the whole of humanity what Moses did for the Jews and Aristotle for the Greeks: He gave it the new earthly, intellectual consciousness. From then on such knowledge as, before, could only be found in mysteries had become a reality through the existence and the teaching of Christ. Wine could be drunk by everyone. Steiner said in one of his books: 'The true life of Jesus was the actual happening, historically, of what before Him had only happened in initiation. All that up till then had been shrouded in the secrecy of the temple, was through Him to be displayed to the world in poignant reality. The life of Jesus is thus a public confirmation of the mysteries.'

In the days before the coming of Christ wine was said to hinder all higher spiritual knowledge. When an orthodox Jew married a Jewess only water was drunk at the ceremony, but otherwise—wine. The occult gifts had to be preserved within the race, but in union with a stranger the key to higher truth had to be destroyed. When, at the wedding at Cana, Christ changed water into wine, He meant to show, according to Steiner, that from then onwards everyone could receive the higher knowledge and enter the kingdom of heaven. One might drink wine and one might marry an alien. All men were brothers. Steiner believed that the period in which men were permitted to drink wine without damaging their higher powers of perception lasted as long as the influence of Christ's earthly life was still felt directly in the world. From then onwards wine again destroyed in man the faculties essential to a clear vision of the spiritual world, as against vague, intuitive impressions.

Steiner indulged for a short time in an excessive consumption of wine, and at the end of this period any possibility of hereditary clairvoyance was destroyed. After that experiment he never touched alcohol again. When, in later years, he accepted private pupils, the main condition he always laid down was that they be complete abstainers.

Even conscious clairvoyance requires a natural disposition. In the arts, such as poetry and painting, strict adherence to rules will not compensate for lack of native talent. And so with occult powers. This applies not only to individuals but also to whole nations. Certain people and certain nations are more gifted in this respect than others. We find the gift particularly common among the members of very pure races, and of families who have frequently intermarried, and thus we find it among royal and very ancient families. The island character of Great Britain has been responsible for intermarriage through the centuries, and its damp climate is said to be very propitious to a natural, inner vegetative power like clairvoyance. In such a climate inner faculties can grow more readily than in a drier climate. The climate enhances not only the gift of the British for second sight; it is also responsible for their faculty for *seeing* life in pictures rather than thinking of it. The Germans *think* of life—this is the reason for their love of theories and abstractions. The British, who 'see' life as a reality, hate theory and premeditation. Not thought but visual memory is their strength, and clairvoyance is seeing and not thinking.

VI

According to Steiner, the main exercises for the development of clairvoyance have to be done when we go to sleep, and in the morning when we wake. The moment at which we go to sleep, the physical body is left inanimate; the spiritual 'I' can now go into space. This has to be done consciously the moment before sleep actually descends upon us. At this moment man's spiritual forces, which can manifest themselves normally only through the physical body, are freed. Now they can loose themselves into the world outside, now is the moment for the human ego to identify itself with it; to see its spiritual instead of its merely material realities; to gather occult knowledge of it. This process of getting 'outside' the body and entering into space has definite cosmic laws and limitations, and depends entirely upon the stage of our occult development. Self-deception is here particularly frequent, and people often assume that their spirit has reached far more distant spheres than it actually has. These spheres are based on astronomic distances.

According to Steiner, the first real attainment of the ego is a penetration into space up to the sphere of the Moon; the next stage is penetration up to Mercury; the next one reaches Venus; the one after that the Sun. As far as to the sphere of the Sun, the ego penetrates space in its personal form; it still carries its memories. After the fourth sphere comes the penetration to Mars. Between the Sun

and Mars the ego loses its self-ness; from now on it becomes impersonal. This fifth sphere is the one that Buddha called nirvana, and Buddha's teaching is experience gathered in the fifth sphere. It is bliss without personality.

For the occultist who is consciously trying to break down all barriers of spiritual knowledge, clairvoyant penetration does not end in the land of bliss. The ego can go farther than nirvana where it had lost its personality and has become pure spirit. From now on it can become creative and its powers become focused on its future reincarnation. The sixth stage brings it to Jupiter, and here the ego gathers the necessary creative faculties. In the next stage, of Saturn, it prepares its personality for its next earthly incarnation. In the last stage, that of the fixed stars, the ego has definitely formed the new personality. Only one who can penetrate to the stage of the fixed stars can 'see' the 'personality' of his future reincarnation.

The next exercises are done on waking up in the morning. Our ego is then returning into its bodily consciousness, and the moment when the exercise is done is the very last moment before the actual awakening. It is that at which the ego takes final possession of its body. Our ordinary daily consciousness is not awake yet, and our spirit is nearest to our microcosm. Now we are quite close to the many phenomena that work within ourselves. Now is the moment when we can perceive the inside of the shell: our physical organs, their functioning, their interconnections, the reasons for their existence, their powers and their weaknesses. Now we are in a state when we can identify ourselves with our organs and our bodily functions, when we can gather occult knowledge of ourselves. But now again this has to be done with the fullest consciousness and in the infinitesimally short space of time that exists between being asleep and being awake.

Both the morning and the evening exercises develop naturally out of certain meditations done regularly before going to sleep and after waking. Both forms of clairvoyant 'seeing' should be eventually possessed in such a way as to be available at any given moment and not only during the exercises of the morning and the evening.

Steiner also gave very detailed instructions for the development of clairvoyance through exercises done in normal waking state. These instructions are to be found in his book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment*, and are intended to lead to the attainment of perceptions purely spiritual. We gain second sight into the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms, and eventually into ourselves and others. There is nothing of mysticism or magic in these exercises, performed as consciously as a scientific experiment. During the exercises we meditate on the specific qualities of the

mineral, vegetable and animal. Steiner believed that such meditations permit the development of inner organs with which we can 'see' and 'hear' the spiritual reality of a thing as clearly as we see and hear its physical reality with our physical eyes and ears. He called them 'the organs of clairvoyance'.

VII

If we accept the foregoing statements, we must also accept the fact that a general medical practitioner who possesses conscious occult knowledge knows more than a specialist who possesses none. The following instance will show that Steiner though [illegible] specific medical knowledge in certain cases. The child of one of his friends suffered since birth from a strange disease: the difference between the lower temperature of the upper part of her body and the higher temperature of the lower part far exceeding the normal difference. Not one of the German, Swiss and Austrian doctors who had been consulted was able to diagnose the disease or to prescribe a remedy, and eventually Steiner himself was asked to see the child.

'The family of one of the parents', he said, 'has consisted for many generations of tall fathers and short mothers. This has resulted in a "symmetrophobia of the formative powers of bodily heat". This state will continue till the child is seven, and one can only counterbalance the natural symmetrophobia by giving the child barium.' Steiner explained that at the age of seven a child loses the 'model body' given by its parents and begins to build its own body; it casts off certain inherited physical features; it loses the first 'given' set of teeth and forms the first set of its 'own' teeth.

As the genealogy of the child's mother was known, it was ascertained that there had indeed been a long line of tall fathers and short mothers in her family. The illness disappeared entirely after the child had reached its seventh year.

Very often clairvoyance of one particular kind is developed, as we have seen in the case of Baron V.'s second sight. Though they were diametrically opposed, both Egyptian and northern clairvoyance were onesided. It was only very much later that an all-round clairvoyance, comprising the perceptions won both in the macrocosm and in the microcosm, could be achieved. Steiner based himself to a certain extent on the first known system which included both kinds. This was expounded in the book *The Chemical Marriage*, by Valentin Andreae, published in 1604. The mysterious hero of this book is one 'Christian Rosenkreuz', an exponent of the mysticism of the Fraternity known as Rosicrucians.

Steiner spoke several times to his most intimate friends about the

occult connections between a disciple and the masters, and Dr Rittelmeyer records one of them: 'What impressed me most', he says, 'was the way Steiner spoke of the great teachers who had crossed his path. Men of extraordinary spirituality, entirely unknown in public life, were there at the right moment, helping him in decisive years to understand and develop critical faculties. After long preparation the necessary helpers are sent at the right moment.... The outer world has not the slightest inkling of it.... Those who recall the intervention of one called "The Unknown" by Jakob Boehme[1] can gain some idea of the things of which Steiner spoke....'

Steiner always guarded against his clairvoyance interfering with his knowledge gained by ordinary means. When Rittelmeyer asked him, in 1916, whether one could know how the war was going to end, Steiner answered: 'Certainly it would be possible, but then one would have to retire from all participation in events. It would not do to investigate these things by occult means and then to allow the knowledge so gained to colour one's own actions'. Steiner treated all occult matters with the greatest reverence, and he often insisted that occult knowledge should not be imparted to the public at large, since it might be treated without the necessary respect.

On the other hand, he believed that the moment had come when such a knowledge should no longer be confined to a few initiates, and that humanity was able to approach hidden knowledge through conscious thought. There were, however, powerful bodies in strong opposition to his attitude. There have always been two main currents in occult schools: the one anxiously guarding all esoteric knowledge for a few privileged people; the other considering that that knowledge should become the property of a wider circle. Steiner belonged to the second group.

Steiner saw his mission very clearly as one based on conscious occult perceptions. 'In my life mission,' he said once, 'I must confine myself to the occult—otherwise I shall not succeed.'

VIII

It was quite natural for the Churches to condemn a teaching that tried through conscious understanding to gain possession of their own privileged knowledge. The Churches will part with that knowledge only if it is shrouded in their own symbolism and their own dogmas. That knowledge must be based on authority and not on the deliberation of the individual. The Churches consider such knowledge too dangerous to be divulged in the manner in which

[1] Jakob Boehme (1575–1624), mystic and philosopher.

Steiner seemed to divulge it; but it would be wrong to imagine Steiner, by birth a Roman Catholic, as anti-Christian. He was deeply religious, and his occult experiences had widened his religious understanding.

Theologians were struck by the profundity of Steiner's conception of Christ, and Rittelmeyer gives us an account of a lecture on Christ given by Steiner to a group of theologians. 'I realized then,' Rittelmeyer narrates, 'how a man in the very presence of Christ speaks of Christ. There was something more than devotional reverence in his words. In freedom and reverence a man was looking up to Christ whose presence was quite near.... The many hundreds of sermons I had heard about Christ faded into shadows...' Rittelmeyer himself was considered one of the greatest German preachers of the day. In later years the Gospels were to become one of the most important foundations of Steiner's teaching, and this even resulted in the establishment of a new Church.

In Steiner's opinion, the life of Christ was the main event in the history of the world, and everything before His coming nothing but a spiritual preparation for it. He saw the highest form of such a spiritual preparation in pre-Christian mysteries, such as those of Ephesus and Eleusis, which imparted their esoteric teaching to those who had been admitted to them by virtue of their occult gifts.

It would lead us too far even to summarize the whole of Steiner's Christology, but some of its main points may perhaps be usefully given here.

The death on the cross distinguishes, for Steiner, the Christian from all other religions. Christ not only taught but also died for what He taught. Thus Christianity begins with a deed, while other religions begin with a doctrine. In Steiner's opinion, Christ's death became a source of the most vital changes in human history and in every individual, no matter of what race or religion. It changed not only man but even the very earth on which man lives. The crucial point of Golgotha lay for Steiner in the fact that Christ made His sacrifice with full consciousness of what He did. Thus the words of St John become for him of the greatest significance: 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.' According to Steiner, this self-imposed sacrifice gives every one of us the power to enter into the mystery of the life and the death of Christ. Golgotha contains for Steiner the concentrated wisdom of the whole universe. By penetrating into it man can attain to the understanding of both the macrocosm around him, and its reproduction within himself, the microcosm.

IX

Both ordinary and occult knowledge were for Steiner necessities, designed to enrich each other, but also to be used only in their proper places. When Dr Rittelmeyer asked him one day: 'Why was it that in spite of all you must have known, even in your early years, you were so completely silent about occult matters until your fortieth year?', Steiner replied: 'I had to make a certain position for myself in the world first. People may say nowadays that my writings are mad, but my earlier work is also there, and they cannot wholly ignore it. . . . And then—I admit it frankly—it needed courage to speak openly about such things. I had first to acquire that courage.'

Just before his death, Steiner explained why he waited so long before he felt entitled to make occult pronouncements. Before he was thirty-six, he had been thinking about physical things in the ordinary scientific way; later on he began to 'see' things around him in their whole physical reality; and they now evoked in him the same spiritual pictures that revealed themselves in his occult visions. This process could be compared to the inspirations of a man like Wordsworth, of which Dean Inge said: 'Wordsworth's inspiration was . . . something which came direct to him; a revelation of the unseen through natural objects, whereby he was granted the power to see into the life of things.' The 'life of things' was the very goal of Steiner's labours.

Dr Rittelmeyer was anxious to test the scientific knowledge which Steiner had acquired by means of his occult experiences. Not being himself a scientist, he employed others to make the test. These specialists were to put questions on their particular branch of science. Dozens of scientists were dispatched to 'examine' Steiner but had to admit that his knowledge of their particular science was greater than their own.

It was therefore not surprising that Steiner's headquarters became an all-round scientific institute. Steiner began to erect it during the war, but as the German authorities would not allow him to build in Munich, he accepted a site on a hill in Dornach, near Basle, offered him by admirers. It was called in Goethe's honour the 'Goetheanum'. The work of constructing it was a solitary instance of truly international collaboration at a time when most European nations were at war. Steiner's pupils from seventeen different countries assembled at Dornach to help in the building of the Goetheanum, and many of them had to overcome great difficulties before they could reach Dornach.

The Goetheanum was designed by Steiner himself. It was built

of wood like a musical instrument, and, since it was intended for lectures, music and recitations, its acoustic properties were carefully considered. Steiner used for its construction the same seven different kinds of wood which are used for the construction of a violin, and the ceiling of the main hall was as buoyant as the walls of a violin. The building contained, besides the lecture hall and theatre, studios and the usual offices. Scientists, taught by Steiner after they had gone through their professional studies in the ordinary universities, lectured every day. The aim of the teaching was to give anthroposophical aspects of such subjects as biology, medicine, astronomy, stagecraft, agriculture, religion, and dance. The theatrical and choreographic activities were directed mainly by Frau Steiner, who had been her husband's close collaborator for many years. Steiner himself was a lover of the theatre, and wrote a number of plays for performance at the Goetheanum.

Once you began to study anthroposophy, you realized the great difference between it and other spiritual systems. Its lack of emotionalism and its scientific character enabled it to be studied from books and lectures. While Keyserling's philosophy, though clearly of an ethical kind, was, at its best, without a clear system, Steiner tried to give to anthroposophy the exactness of mathematics.

X

It was with some excitement that I went to hear Steiner himself for the first time. The hall was packed and filled with an atmosphere of expectation. I have seen more devoted, more sentimental or hysterical audiences, but I cannot recollect having ever seen a more expectant one.

Steiner began his lecture without preliminaries or introductions: he was 'in medias res' a minute after the lecture had begun. It took me much longer to overcome my unexpected inner reaction to his appearance. To be quite candid, I was slightly terrified. There was something awesome in the deepset eyes, in the ascetic face, bleak as a landscape in the moon, in the strands of jet-black hair falling over the pale forehead. I do not remember ever having seen a man in whose presence I had such an eerie feeling.

When I got used to the singularity of Steiner's appearance, I could discern how human and simple he was. The impassioned way in which he spoke, the expressiveness of the Austrian intonation in his voice, the theatrical effect of his black bow tie, contrasted oddly with the simplicity of his whole manner. My first impressions were lost entirely after a few more lectures. I understood only later why his face had impressed me in such an uncommon way: it was as

though the face were not big enough to contain the whole intensity of its spiritual expression. When I showed a photograph of Steiner to a friend, she exclaimed: 'That man must have suffered terribly.' Indeed, his face bore the marks of untold experiences and sufferings.

XI

At the time I was attending the lectures, Steiner's main activities were centred upon a subject that had become of paramount importance in his life, the 'Threefold Commonwealth of the Social Structure'. It was the result of his attempts to find a solution to political and economic difficulties brought to a head by the war. The war had been an event of the greatest personal concern to him.

Though he hoped for an Austro-German victory, he had a very shrewd notion of the true situation. He never subscribed to the common belief in the supremacy of Germany as expressed in terms of armies, guns and battleships. Steiner had declared his mistrust of the generals long before others began to understand that it was futile to expect very much from them.

He believed in a German mission in the world. But he did not share the view of most Germans that Germany's mission could be fulfilled by her armies, and that her final goal was the Kaiser's 'place in the sun'. His esteem for Germany embraced all that he believed best in the Germanic spirit, no matter whether it came from achievements with which Steiner himself was not in sympathy, such as Kant's philosophy, conceived on the shores of the Baltic; or from things he loved, such as the music of Vienna and Salzburg; or from the work of the poets and thinkers in the Czech capital of Prague. Germany was for him not so much a political and geographical as an ideological reality. Hence the German mission could only be of a spiritual kind.

Steiner was anxious that some sound expression of the necessities of Central Europe should be brought forward as a convincing answer to the suggestions of President Wilson. Accordingly he prepared a programme that by its deeper vision was to outbalance Wilson's Fourteen Points based merely on political premises. His ideas were expressed in a manifesto, and in a programme of the 'Threefold Commonwealth'. The Manifesto appeared in 1919. Its main points, reproduced by most continental newspapers, were based on Steiner's ideas of the 'Threefold Commonwealth'.

Man was for Steiner a 'threefold' being, composed of will-power, emotions and mind. The life of a nation was for him likewise a Threefold Commonwealth, created by economical, political, and cultural activities.

Economics include the production, distribution and consumption of commodities and the welfare of the people. Politics are the expression of the native psychology of a people, and in Steiner's programme included military as well as political matters. The cultural life included the sciences, education, letters and social services. Economics must be capable of adapting themselves from day to day to the existing conditions; they must be run by experts and must not be hindered by political necessities. Political life and administration are by the very nature of a given national psychology conservative, and Steiner therefore wanted to allow them to preserve their nature. This could only be achieved if they were run by men with the greatest experience of life, by the 'elders' of the nation. While economics are opportunistic and politics conservative, the intellectual current tends towards individualism. It should be directed by the most outstanding personalities.

These three great currents of national life must be kept independent of one another. Each one should be represented by its own legislative assembly, and thus the various activities of the nation would be directed by experts only. The leaders of the three assemblies would meet in a sort of Senate where common problems would be considered and decided upon.

At the time I was attending Steiner's lectures, the first session of the new Republican Parliament was being held at Weimar. Even in the first months of its existence all the drawbacks of immature democratic methods as applied by a people without political education or tradition could be perceived. Indeed, the moment was not very distant when members of thirty or more distinct political parties were squabbling in the Reichstag.

Steiner's ideas contradicted most of the existing political systems. And yet German public life could be saved from dissolution only if the three main currents of life were divorced from party politics, and from the amateurishness of the new democratic politics. Steiner hoped that such a rationalization of German life would destroy all previously prevailing causes of an unreasonable nationalism. He also hoped that by a deeper understanding of the real necessities, even the national ambitions of the various peoples within the Habsburg Monarchy could be outweighed. A more logically founded state of affairs would make their aims as unnecessary as Wilson's Fourteen Points.

Steiner's political ideas did not seem to take sufficiently into consideration the individuality and the stifled ambitions of the nations concerned with them, and I was more impressed by his personality than by these ideas. But though I was conscious of the

advantage of association with him, I was honest enough to assume that, at this stage, I could gather all I needed from his written works, and that any effort to be nearer him would only be an unfair trespass upon his time.

XII

The attacks on Rudolf Steiner did not cease till his death. On New Year's Eve, 1922, the new Goetheanum was burnt down, and there was no doubt that this was an act committed by Steiner's enemies, and only one of the results of the poisonous propaganda directed against him. As every detail of the Goetheanum had been conceived by Steiner himself, as most of it had been built by his pupils as an original 'work by hand', and as the whole structure consisted merely of carvings in wood, the loss was quite irreparable.

Steiner and his pupils fought the flames all through the night; but when the morning of the New Year broke on the hills of the Jura, little was left of his magnificent 'instrument'. One of his closest pupils found Steiner weeping in one of the rooms that had escaped destruction. Nobody had ever seen tears in his eyes before. 'Herr Doktor,' he said, 'I have never seen you weep before. You have withstood much heavier blows.'

'I am not crying because the work of ten years, the result of the greatest sacrifices, has been destroyed,' Steiner answered. 'I am weeping because the Western world will not see a monument which more than anything else would have converted it to my way of thinking.'

Steiner believed that the Western world, which he regarded as less intellectual than the Central European or the Eastern, accepts a new teaching only if it can see it in action. The West must see things to believe in them. The Goetheanum was for the West the most visible and most striking crystallization of Steiner's teaching. 'Central Europe', he went on, 'did not require the visible form of the Goetheanum. It can perceive new things through thought alone. The Goetheanum might have convinced the Western world.'

But he did not allow sentiment to affect his own activities or those of the people who had come to learn from him. Each year during Christmas the pupils produced a mystery play written for the occasion by Steiner, who insisted that the play should be acted even though the walls were still smouldering and most of the properties were burnt.

The next day Steiner drew up plans for a new Goetheanum. As he disliked theoretical work of any kind, he modelled these plans. The new Goetheanum was to be much bigger than the first, and it was to

include laboratories, special lecture-rooms, studios and workshops. But its animating purpose was to be quite different. Steiner explained to one of his nearest friends: 'The first Goetheanum was a work of love, made with money of love and sacrifice. It had to be a living structure. That's why I built it as a musical instrument in which the human voice can live. The new Goetheanum will be built from the money that the insurance companies will pay. They will hate to pay us. It will no longer be money given with love, and I must use it accordingly. The new Goetheanum will be built not of wood but of dead material—of concrete'.

Though endless worry, strain and labour told on Steiner's health, he continued his work with undiminished fervour. His work grew instead of decreasing. It was as if Steiner were anxious to leave behind all the spiritual knowledge that he had discovered. He considered his knowledge indispensable for the improvement of a world sinking fast into the mire of international disunity, and materialism.

Several of Steiner's pupils wondered why he did not employ some of his supernatural powers in curing himself. Had he not cured many other people by finding the precise diagnosis and by prescribing the only helpful method of healing? But Steiner was not to become unfaithful to lifelong principles now that the physical end was near. He had considered that his occult powers could only be used for spreading knowledge and helping others and that he had no right to use them for his own good. Though he believed that his ordinary medical knowledge would be sufficient to fight the illness, this could only be done if he were spared the exhaustion of too much work.

Neither the visitors who used to come to the Goetheanum from all over the world nor the many pupils realized the gravity of Steiner's condition. Once or twice he asked them to be more considerate. Notices were even posted requesting people to apply for personal interviews only in cases of the greatest urgency. It helped but little. There was a constant stream of people who came to ask Steiner purely personal questions. And yet the days when he was unable to take any food were becoming more and more frequent. The interviews came on top of his lectures and his private work, and finally his physical resistance broke down altogether. Nevertheless he was determined to carry on with one last piece of work on which he had been engaged for a number of years. It was the carving of an immense statue, representing Christ reforming the powers of the world after His victory over the Spirit of Darkness. It consisted of several figures, and Steiner, though untrained as a sculptor, had carved most of the large group unaided. Now, reduced to a skeleton, he was spending hour after hour on the scaffolding erected round

the monument. When he was too weak to stand on the scaffolding he had to abandon the statue, and his bed was brought in and placed under it. Though no longer able to sit up, he went on working. All he could do was to model the plans for the new Goetheanum. The model was resting on his blanket till almost the very last moment. He died at the feet of his Christ on 30 March 1925, and the burial service was read by Dr Rittelmeyer in the hall in which Steiner had given his most important lectures.

In England the *Contemporary Review* published an article by Sir Kenneth Mackenzie in which the writer said: 'The work Dr Steiner has done is so immense that it is really very hard to grasp its extent; nobody could keep up with him. He was at least a hundred years ahead of his time . . . hence the isolation in which he lived. . . . That he was widely loved, as well as deeply respected, is shown by the fact that thousands came from all over the Continent and even from England, pouring into Dornach for the funeral service, and completely overcrowding the town and neighbourhood. . . .'

PART TWO

THE ENGLISH ADVENTURE

'In my Father's house are many mansions.'
ST JOHN xiv. 2.

Introduction: The English Scene

'. . . those years immediately after the war—the era in England of physical exhaustion and psycho-analysis. We only allowed two virtues then, courage and "intellectual honesty", which meant that it doesn't matter what you do as long as you know you are doing it. . . . War profiteers were subscribing to war memorials and exhibiting righteous indignation at the miners having pianos in their cottages. The Church was pointing out that it had said all along God was on our side; . . . and the proletariat was in a sort of convalescent daze.' This is how a member of that generation which was too young to fight in the war, yet old enough to be aware of its consequences, described conditions in England after 1919.[1]

A foreigner coming to England would have hardly seen the situation in the same light. He would have seen only the soundness, the order and the calm of life in England, as contrasted with the melodramatic and restless atmosphere of the Continent. What he would have noticed as most striking would have been the great gulf between most people's intellectual and their emotional responses: the intellectual reactions were hesitant and not always convincing, the emotional definite and strong. He would have expected most of the newer spiritual movements in England to have been founded upon an emotional basis.

Though generalizations are dangerous, it is true to say that among one group of British people alone—the 'dissatisfied'—were spiritual movements of an unconventional nature to be found. Those people who could find no fault with the leading tendencies of the time, and who were 'unshaken in the faith they held', constituted the majority.

'It is interesting to see', says Mr C. Day Lewis, 'how our generation, sick to death of Protestant democratic liberalism and the intolerable burden of the individual conscience, are turning to the old and the new champions of order and authority, the Roman Catholic Church or Communism.'

[1] *New Country*, 'Letter to a Young Revolutionary', by C. Day Lewis (Hogarth Press).

II

What distinguished the young Communist enthusiasts in England from their continental brethren was that while for the latter Communism was mainly a political creed, for many of the English Communists it was an ethical problem, and indeed a definite faith. Communism played the same part in their lives that the movements of Stefan George and Rudolf Steiner played in the lives of young Germans. Some of its more earnest adherents were undergraduates at Oxford and Cambridge with an impressive academic record. The effects of 'conversion' were so violent in some that they at once began to neglect their studies at the University—for which, together with the rest of their former activities, they felt the utmost contempt—and devoted themselves to an orgy of 'party work'. Others, less resolute, while organizing processions and drawing up questionnaires continued to sip sherry in each other's rooms, though with a conscience uneasy at such a betrayal of party principles.

The preceding generation had had no faith to look for, and could only satisfy its need by a restless search for fresh experience. The more frivolous, who had spent their time in an endless round of amusements, have been immortalized in the works of such writers as Noel Coward and Evelyn Waugh. The more serious, though cynical and disillusioned, were aware of their plight, which was identical with that revealed in the earlier poetry of T. S. Eliot. In Communism the succeeding generation had found a faith, and, in finding it, had broken through the prevailing indifference.

The more immediate cause of the movement was moral indignation at the iniquities that were being perpetrated under the capitalist system. Under capitalism, they argued, war was inevitable. They flaunted the works of Karl Marx in the faces of the 'bourgeois' disbelievers, though one may doubt whether they had penetrated very far into *Das Kapital*.

Had this generation of politically-minded and dissatisfied youths gone through all the experiences of German youth—weighed down with the despair of a defeated people, unemployed, without money, without prospects of improvement, and yet eaten up by a thirst for power—then it might have evolved some spiritual creed more genuinely British and deeper than alien Communism.

III

Though not many British people may find complete spiritual satisfaction in their established churches these have become so much a part of British tradition and synonymous with order and security that a denial of them would amount almost to a denial of the whole

structure of British life. Nevertheless some of the spiritual movements outside the churches evoked the widest interest.

Britons hate organization and uniformity; to go through all the external formalities of joining a new movement invariably alienates them. But such superficial indications are deceptive. That a Briton does not 'discuss his religion' does not necessarily mean that he takes no interest in spiritual subjects. When the B.B.C. arranged a series of talks on 'Inquiry into the Unknown', they received thousands of letters—more, in fact, than they had ever before received.

With one exception, the nature of all the movements I had been in touch with at home in England was in keeping with what was characteristic of the British attitude towards spiritual investigations. Neither the sentimental and snobbish amateurishness of the British Israelites nor the devotional simplicity of the Four-square Gospellers; neither Theosophy in its later guise as created by Krishnamurti, nor the happy-go-lucky religiosity of Dr Buchman was surprising.

British excursions into the world of the spirit had their roots either in emotionalism or in the traditional reverence for 'scientific truth'. The results of the former were Theosophy, Revivalism and Buchmanism—of the latter, the Society for Psychical Research. While in Germany the most outstanding names in post-war attempts to find new truths—Steiner, George, Keyserling—had a distinctly intellectual flavour, in England the names of Dr Buchman, Annie Besant, Krishnamurti testified to the emotional nature of the movements.

IV

Of the distinctively post-war movements, those of Krishnamurti, Dr Buchman and Principal Jeffreys were the largest. Buchmanism, which required the minimum of intellectual effort, had become the creed of a section of the wealthier middle classes. Krishnamurti appealed to those with independent minds who had no longer been able to find any satisfaction in the dogmatized forms of post-war Theosophy. His followers belonged to many nations and to all classes. The revivalist George Jeffreys, though scoffed at by the intellectuals and the churches, brought spiritual happiness to thousands. The mysterious Gurdjieff and the Parsee Shri Meher Baba both had many followers in England. Among all these movements the success of a system as intellectual as Ouspensky's was alone surprising.

Though hardly any of these movements were distinctly English they are treated together as one 'English Adventure', for they all originated or acquired their importance in this country.

CHAPTER IV

The Throne that was Christ's: Krishnamurti

ONE Sunday morning I was sitting in a small panelled room in one of those fine Queen Anne houses that are still to be found in certain parts of Westminster. It was raining hard, and the lowering sky robbed the room of the few bright colours that some roses in a vase and an old chair covered with tapestry had introduced into it. The house belonged to the Dowager Lady De La Warr, and I was waiting to meet Mr Jiddu Krishnamurti, who was staying there on a short visit.

The young Indian was supposed to be rather shy, and, in view of all the sensational press reports about him, I did not find this in the least surprising. I came to this meeting with an open mind, but I must confess I found it hard to feel anything but the profoundest scepticism. I recalled several of the strange tales that I had read in the course of the last few days. One of them remained in my memory with particular vividness, though it described an event that had taken place almost twenty years earlier. It was an account of a convention at Benares, and its author was at the time private secretary to Krishnamurti, then aged fifteen. He had written: 'The line of members began to pass up the central passage . . . with a bow to the Head [Krishnamurti]. . . . The whole atmosphere . . . was thrown into power vibration. . . . All saw the young figure draw itself up and take on an air of dignified majesty. . . . The approaching member involuntarily dropped on his knees, bowing his head to the ground. . . . A great coronet of brilliant shimmering blue appeared a foot or two above the young head and from this descended funnelwise bright streams of blue light. . . . The Lord Maitreya was there embodying Himself in His Chosen. Within the coronet blazed the crimson of the symbol of the Master Jesus, the rosy cross . . .' I am afraid I did not read on much farther after the 'rosy cross'; but I was told that the writer of these impressive lines was not the only one who claimed to have seen this colourful performance.

I had read in a newspaper only the night before that Krishnamurti's followers in Holland had finally proclaimed him the 'World Teacher'. He himself had uttered these words: 'Krishnamurti has

entered into that life, which is represented by some as the Christ, by others as Buddha, by others still as the Lord Maitreya. . . .' These words had put the conscience of Krishnamurti's followers at ease and had induced them to proclaim him once and for all 'The Vehicle of the Lord'.

I had come across the name Krishnamurti directly only a few weeks previously at the house of Lady De La Warr at Wimbledon, where I had met some of his most intimate friends—experienced men and women who were not at all the sort of people to be bluffed. The centre of the group was Mrs Annie Besant, then almost eighty years old and a most attractive person, very bright and untheosophical, full of political and intellectual interests, which she expressed in a lively and amusing manner. Next to her was Mr George Lansbury, the veteran labour leader. There was very little to suggest a religious fanaticism in his slow, deep-voiced pronouncements. Anything more solid could hardly be imagined. Even our hostess mentioned the subject of theosophy only casually. Then there was a member of Parliament who, I believe, was an Under Secretary of State; he was evidently a great authority on India. There was nothing exalted or mystical about the other people in the room. These were Krishnamurti's closest friends in England. It was difficult to imagine these people talking of the 'great coronet of brilliant blue' and 'the rosy cross of the Lord Jesus'. Annie Besant herself was obviously a very shrewd woman. Though at the time I knew little about her or her work, I could see that there was not much in life that had escaped her.

II

And then Krishnamurti entered the room. He walked towards me with an inviting smile, and we shook hands. I was immediately struck by his remarkably handsome face, and after a few minutes' conversation I was equally charmed by his attractive personality. These two impressions were very strong, and I suppose they determined in some ways my future attitude towards him. I heard later from other people that their first impressions of Krishnamurti were the same as mine.

Indeed, he was much more handsome than his photographs made him appear. He seemed no older than twenty-two or twenty-three, and he had the slender grace of a shy young animal. His eyes were large and his features finely cut. His head was crowned with thick silky black hair. But it cannot have been the aesthetic impression or the musical quality of the voice alone that had put me at ease so quickly. He was obliging, though reserved; but in spite of this, after

half an hour's conversation, he made me believe that I had known him most of my life; and yet there was nothing particularly easy-going about him, though there were a pronounced sense of balance and poise in his manner. And there was an undercurrent of human warmth which was responsible for the sensation of spiritual intimacy between us.

These were my first impressions of Mr Jiddu Krishnamurti of Adyar, Madras, India; Castle Eerde, Ommen, Holland; Arya Vihara, Ojai, California, and the Amphitheatre, Sydney, Australia.

III

Jiddu Krishnamurti was born in 1897 at Madanapalle in Southern India. He was the eighth child of Brahmin parents. His father Narayaniah had a minor post in the civil service, and afterwards became an official at the headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras. One day in 1900, when little Krishnaji was bathing in the river with his younger brother Nityananda, the Rev Charles Leadbeater saw them. Mr Leadbeater was Mrs Besant's closest collaborator and one of the leaders of the Theosophical Society. He talked to the boys and invited them to his bungalow. And then something took place which was to affect not only the life of the two Jiddu brothers but equally that of many thousands of people all over the world. Mr Leadbeater discovered that the older boy, Krishnamurti, was none other than the 'Vehicle of the new World Teacher, the Lord Maitreya' whose last incarnation on earth had apparently been in the person of Jesus Christ.

Now, this was a most extraordinary discovery for anyone to make, even for a theosophical leader of some fame. Charles Leadbeater, however, not only believed in his vision but even convinced Mrs Besant of the truth of it; and then began a series of events, almost unparalleled in modern history. Krishnamurti was to be prepared for his mission, and both he and his brother Nitya were taken into Charles Leadbeater's charge—Nitya merely as a playmate for his more exalted brother.

As there had previously been some gossip about Mr Leadbeater, the father Narayaniah demanded the return of his two boys. The former renommée of Mr Leadbeater seemed to have outweighed in the father's estimation the possibility of the future fame of his own son. There followed long struggles outside and inside the law-courts. Mrs Besant was appointed guardian of the boys, and excitement upon excitement kept newspaper correspondents busy for a long time until eventually Charles Leadbeater had to leave India, and the boys were sent to England. They were to receive an education that would com-

plete the beginnings made in India, and that would prepare young Krishnajii for his future activities in the Western world.

The publicity caused by Krishnamurti's association with Mr Leadbeater entirely over-shadowed all that had been favourable to the boy in that association. Krishnamurti himself admitted in later years that thanks to Mr Leadbeater he had enjoyed all the privileges of an all-round education, combining the best of eastern and western methods. Such an education was usually available for only a few Indians. Thanks to Mr Leadbeater, he had been rescued from a life of poverty and removed to surroundings that were beneficial to both mind and body. Krishnamurti also admitted that Mr Leadbeater was always the most considerate guardian, and that he was never anything but the teacher anxious for the spiritual and bodily happiness of his pupil. In view of the slander that followed Mr Leadbeater for many years it is important to state these facts as they really were.

Meanwhile, in India, a new society, 'The Order of the Star in the East', had been formed. Its aim was to provide the necessary platform for the message of Krishnamurti, 'to proclaim the coming of a World-Teacher and to prepare the world for that event'. Most of its members were theosophists. With Mrs Besant they believed deeply in the truth of Charles Leadbeater's visions and in the part that Krishnamurti was to play in the future history of mankind. Nevertheless certain small sections of the Theosophical Society found it impossible to subscribe to the new doctrine, and felt obliged to leave the movement. The German branch of the Theosophical Society not only disapproved of the Krishnamurti legend but broke away altogether under the leadership of Rudolf Steiner.

There is another version of the origin of Krishnamurti's 'divine mission'. Hardly anyone knows it, and I heard it for the first time from Ouspensky; yet, since its source is impeccable, I shall quote it, even though Krishnamurti himself does not seem to know it.

According to this version, Leadbeater's original 'vision' was pure invention. Together with Mrs Besant he is supposed to have believed that a young human being brought up as a 'messiah'—educated in an appropriate manner and supported by a world-wide wave of love and the implicit faith of great masses of people—ought to develop certain Christlike qualities; and it appears that Leadbeater and Annie Besant believed to the very end that Krishnamurti was thus developing naturally into the personality of the 'World Teacher'.

The difference between the generally known and the above version is not large, for in both cases Leadbeater and Mrs Besant did not claim that Krishnamurti *was* the messiah but that about twenty years' preparation would be necessary for him to develop into the

'perfect vehicle' for the messiah. In either case they seem to have had no doubts as to the successful result of their method.

From 1912 to 1922 Krishnamurti and his brother lived in England, being educated partly at private schools and partly by tutors. They used to spend their holidays with Lady De La Warr, who became a sort of guardian to them. Krishnamurti was intended for Cambridge, but when it appeared that the university authorities were loath to accept a youth of his unique fame, it was decided that he should go on studying with private tutors.

He was intelligent and keen, and seemed to absorb Western learning with much greater zest and with even better results than the ordinary English boy. Though certain influences during his early youth at Adyar may have been detrimental to him, there is no doubt that the spiritual training that he had to undergo in those years and the feeling of grave responsibility that had been instilled into him had a good effect. In England, Krishnamurti was as popular with everyone who came into touch with him as he had been in India. His personal charm, which had impressed me in the first minutes of our meeting, must have had the same effect on other people. The influence of a woman of Mrs Besant's wisdom and experience was, no doubt, also beneficial. Such a mentor was bound to leave strong impressions upon the mind of a sensitive youth.

After the year 1921, Krishnamurti began to lead a more independent life. He travelled extensively; he gave up more and more of his time to writing poetry, and he also wrote articles for the many international publications of the 'Order of the Star'. Those were the days when Krishnamurti laid the foundations of many valuable friendships with men of letters, artists and musicians, who were all attracted by the charm of his unusual personality.

Perhaps the closest friendship was that with Bourdelle, the French sculptor. After the death of Rodin, Antoine Bourdelle was considered the leading French sculptor, and his fame extended far beyond Europe. Bourdelle had been greatly impressed by Krishnamurti at their first meeting, and had subsequently modelled a large bust of him. He always considered it one of his most important works, and, in a posthumous exhibition of Bourdelle's sculpture in London, the bust had the place of honour. 'When one hears Krishnamurti speak one is astounded,' said Bourdelle in an interview with *L'Intransigeant*; 'so much wisdom in so young a man! There is no one in existence who is more impersonal, whose life is more dedicated to others. . . . In the desert of life Krishnamurti is an oasis.'

Krishnamurti's greatest following was in England, but it was interesting to note the impression he made on the French, who are

usually hostile to manifestations that cannot be defined in terms of logic. Nowhere have there appeared so many books and articles about Krishnamurti as in France. Frenchmen of an artistic disposition were the first to whom his personality appealed, quite apart from his fame or his supposed mission in the world.

In 1925 the Theosophical Society considered that the moment had come for Krishnamurti to acknowledge his destiny in more formal fashion, and his official recognition accordingly took place during the celebration of the jubilee of the Society. Theodore Besterman, a biographer of Mrs Besant, describes the central scene of the proceedings: '. . . In the shadow of the great banyan tree in the grounds of the Adyar headquarters, Mr Krishnamurti was addressing some three thousand assembled delegates. . . . A few of those present had been warned what to expect, and these communicated their excitement to those around them. The whole audience was in the sort of state in which the individual is merged in the mass—a revivalist psychology. . . . The words of the speaker became more and more urgent. "We are all expecting Him", he said: "He will be with us soon." A pause, and then, with a dramatic change from the third person to the first, the voice went on, "I come to those who want sympathy, who want happiness. . . . I come not to destroy but to build." . . . And afterwards Mrs Besant said that "the voice not heard on earth for two thousand years had once again been heard".'

It was now decided that Krishnamurti should have something more than the platform provided by the 'Order of the Star', and a suitable territory was bought in the Ojai Valley in California, where people from all over America could gather for yearly meetings at which Krishnamurti would deliver his message. California was particularly dear to Krishnamurti's heart, since it was here that his beloved younger brother Nityananda had died a few years earlier. For the Australian followers there was erected the Amphitheatre in Sydney; for the Indian friends a camp in the Rishi Valley. A Dutch nobleman, Baron Philip Pallandt van Eerde, an enthusiastic admirer of Krishnamurti, put at his disposal his Castle Eerde at Ommen in Holland. Eerde was to become Krishnamurti's European headquarters, and here his European followers were to assemble at a vast camp meeting which was to be held every summer.

In January 1927 Krishnamurti spoke at a meeting in California, and concluded his speech by reading one of his recent poems, which ended with these words:

'*I am the Truth,*
I am the Law,

I am the Refuge,
I am the Guide,
The Companion and the Beloved.'

The imaginative reporter of the *Theosophist* added to this a poetic summing up of the situation: 'As the last words were uttered there was a sprinkle of light rain that seemed like a benediction and, spanning the valley, a perfect rainbow arch shone out.' Meanwhile Mrs Besant was travelling from country to country, giving lectures to packed halls and speaking in her masterly way of the new World Teacher.

Many details of this extraordinary 'life story' flashed through my mind when Krishnamurti entered that room. But after half an hour's conversation with him I was willing to forget most of the reports I had heard. The picturesque story of his life seemed to me no longer of much importance.

I accepted an invitation to come to stay with Krishnamurti at Eerde where I should meet his friends from all over the world; and, besides listening to his public speeches, I should also have an opportunity of further personal conversation.

IV

I actually went twice to Eerde in the course of the summer. The first time I could only spend two or three days there, so I decided to visit Krishnamurti again in a month's time, when I should be able to stay at least ten days, and witness the huge gathering of theosophists and members of Krishnamurti's own movement.

To a novelist the atmosphere at Eerde would no doubt have offered attractive material. How tempting it would have been to describe the little castle, an elegant building of the early eighteenth century rising up from a moat and connected with the 'mainland' by a delightful semicircular terrace; the romantic canal spanned by a decorative stone bridge; the long low pavilions on each side of the castle; the formal circular garden in front of it. And what opportunities were offered by the ancient park, with its avenues, magnificent trees, fields, its river, and water lilies on the pond.

And then the guests themselves, wandering reverently under old trees discussing the deepest problems of life, and greeting one another with smiles of forgiveness and looks of understanding.

There were fair Scandinavian girls with transparent complexions, and voices so soft that they seemed incapable of saying any but the holiest of things. Some of them helped in the kitchen, others in the offices, and in the evenings they sat together and held one another's

hands. There were several Americans in whose accents the masters, gurus and astral worlds used to lose all their ethereal qualities to become convincingly matter of fact. There was a very learned French lady with three daughters, who looked as though they preferred the Côte d'Azur to the Dutch scenery, but had to content themselves with their mother's knowledge of all sorts of *devas*, Chinese saints and Tibetan *gomtchengs*. There was an Italian countess who was always telling me of yet another dream she had had about Krishnamurti; and there were several elderly English ladies, quiet, kind, helpful, and wearing a surprising amount of jewellery, whose triangular or circular shapes showed clearly that they were worn for their symbolic significance and not in order to satisfy a craving for beauty. Then there were several Indians of indeterminate age but obviously higher education, who at night would appear in their attractive native dresses, the envy of their American, Dutch, British and Scandinavian fellow guests, many of whom wore sandals and looked less picturesque. Some charming Australians and Anglo-Indians and a Scottish couple completed the house-party.

The writer of fiction would have found even more vivid 'local colour' in the large camp, situated in the woods a couple of miles outside the castle. Most of its inmates abhorred the idea of meat as violently as that of wine or tobacco; they looked deep into your eyes when they talked to you; they had a weakness for sandals, for clothes without any particular distinction of shape, for the rougher kind of textiles and such colours as mauve, bottle-green and purple. The men affected long hair, while the women kept theirs short. There were several workmen and farmers among them who had been saving up for several years in order to come here. Two German youths had walked for two or three weeks from a distant part of Germany.

The organization of the camp lay in the hands of a few Dutch followers of Krishnamurti, experienced business men, who had succeeded in turning out this model camp city in the midst of uninhabited forests and fields. There was row upon row of tents of all sizes; there were shower baths, attractive huts with post office, bookshops, photographer, ambulance and information bureau. In a huge dining-tent excellent vegetarian meals were served; there was a lecture tent with seats for three thousand people, and there was even an open-air theatre. Everywhere one found helpful guides and interpreters and a fine spirit of fellowship. As the Dutch summer was at times trying—with rain and icy winds—the nerves of the people must have been strained, and harmony could be achieved only by self-discipline.

As I did not live in camp, which I visited only for the lectures and an occasional meal, I knew the routine of life at the castle much better.

Since the castle itself was not large enough to accommodate Krishnamurti's twenty or more personal guests, most of us were put up in the long pavilion flanking the castle. Besides Krishnamurti and his closest friend Rajagopal, the head of the whole organization, only a few friends stayed within the castle itself. The dining-room, library, reception rooms and offices were on the ground floor. In the reception rooms there were several attractive pieces of Dutch furniture, and the main room, called the state room, contained, besides some fine panelling, four handsome Flemish tapestries. An ingeniously constructed wooden Louis XIV staircase led from the entrance hall to the first floor and to the bedrooms. The former owner of the castle, Baron van Pallandt, kept for himself only one or two of the castle rooms.

I stayed in one of the two pavilions, where a visitor had to look after his own room and make his own bed. When after a day or two some kind spirit discovered that my talent for domestic work was more original than effective, my services in this direction were no longer expected, and, for the remainder of my stay, my bed would be made with enviable skill.

In the morning, we assembled in the big state room. We took off our shoes—more experienced guests than myself would appear in bedroom slippers—and sat down on the floor to meditate. There were several problems connected with the morning meditations about which I wished to be enlightened. Of course I might have asked any of my twelve or fifteen fellow guests attending this service, but I could never summon the courage to do this, for fear lest they might find out how ignorant I really was. I believed in meditation, but I always found it much more successful in solitude. Just when I was getting into the right frame of mind, one of the meditators must needs sneeze or cough, and thereupon all my powers of concentration would be dissipated.

And I should have liked also to ask whether it was essential to sit on the floor without having been instructed previously how to do it. Most of us had been brought up in the West, and were not used to Eastern postures. I found that my attention had to be directed towards my aching spine and ankles, and a good deal of the energy that was wanted for a better purpose was thus wasted. Even the elementary 'lotus posture' which is indispensable to meditation done in the pose adopted by my fellow meditators, can only be comfortably assumed after many patient and painful exercises. How, then, could I expect all these people, most of whom had never undergone the essential training, to have the necessary command over their

bodies? I could see for myself that hardly one of them was sitting in the correct attitude—that of intertwined ankles and straight spine.

Had it not been for my shortcomings, the morning meditations would undoubtedly have provided me with a source of inspiration. Someone read aloud a few words—I believe it was always one of Krishnamurti's sayings—and after that we were meant to meditate upon them. The tightly shut eyes of the other guests made me feel very envious of the wonderful ten minutes they were spending on some blissful plane.

From the state room we moved into the dining-room for breakfast, which was always an enjoyable meal. Lunch, too, was a very attractive meal, not only by virtue of the quality of the vegetarian dishes but equally because hunger, and the pleasure of satisfying it, induced many of the guests to cast off their reserve and to show greater individuality of character than conversation at other times had led one to expect.

As a rule, everyone attended to his own wants, but I was often permitted to wait on Annie Besant, and to sit next to her at meals. There was a childlike quality about her—not the childishness of old age, but rather the essential simplicity and happy disposition of childhood itself. You felt that she knew so much more than anybody else present; but her greater wisdom and experience never interfered with her manner of treating even the youngest members of the party as her equals.

The saintliness that hung over Eerde like a pink cloud made me somewhat sceptical; and yet the first meeting between Annie Besant and Krishnamurti on her arrival at the castle had greatly impressed me.

Krishnamurti had been waiting for her in the circular garden in front of the castle. We, his guests, kept in the background. When the car arrived, Krishnamurti walked up to it to open the door. Annie Besant appeared, dressed in white Indian robes with white shoes, and a white shawl over her snow-white hair. Krishnamurti bowed his head and kissed the old lady's hand. She in her turn put both her hands on his black hair and whispered a few words to him. In her face there was the expression of the deepest tenderness, and I could see that she was crying. It was obvious that their welcome was an expression of their personal affection for each other and had nothing to do with their theosophical relationship. Krishnamurti took Annie Besant's arm and led her slowly towards the castle. We were introduced to her and shook hands. Her eyes were still moist and the loving smile was still lingering on her lips.

Krishnamurti hardly ever came down to breakfast. Generally he

remained in his bedroom, very simple, and the smallest in the castle. After breakfast, some of his most intimate fellow-workers used to walk up the staircase and disappear behind its doors. My curiosity was pricked by these morning processions. I imagined mysterious happenings: special initiations or mental exercises of a higher order, reserved only for the 'inner circle'. I never found out what went on behind the doors—probably household bills and questions of daily routine were discussed.

In the mornings and on most afternoons, there were lectures in the big tent in the woods. Krishnamurti spoke almost every day; and then there followed speeches by Annie Besant, Mr Jinarajadasa, the vice-president of the Theosophical Society, a Frenchman Prof Marcault, a Dutch scholar Dr van der Leeuw, and one or two other followers of Krishnamurti. The main tenor of Krishnamurti's talks was that the kingdom of happiness lies within ourselves, and the other lecturers spoke on very much the same lines. Krishnamurti's principal talks were of an autobiographical kind, and he tried to explain in them how he himself had found truth by giving up all conventional conceptions of life.

Many people from the camp would come to see the home in which their prophet lived. They were taken inside the castle and along the quiet garden paths, and they hardly dared utter a word. There were also sightseers and tourists, who had heard of the new messiah from India and who would peep through the gates as though expecting strange miracles to occur at any moment. They looked at Krishnamurti's guests, apparently convinced that we were the disciples of a magician.

In the hall of the castle there was a very large, new gramophone, given to Krishnamurti by one of his admirers. Krishnamurti was a great lover of music, and I caught him one evening sitting by himself in the corner of a little study off the main hall. It was after dinner and the room was quite dark. I can still remember the record: it was the slow movement of the G Minor Quartet by Debussy—that almost unreal piece of strangely coloured cascades and sudden melancholy halts. Whenever I hear that movement I see the night over the castle, and Krishnamurti sitting by himself in the little room and listening joyfully to the violins.

Several members of our house-party were fond of music, and would spend the evening listening to the gramophone. Their eyes were closed, their souls no doubt very wide open, in their faces was a mixture of happiness and reverence, and you could see all the silver and mauve ethereal pictures that the music painted for them. Perhaps I was too frivolous for them, and at times I would become genuinely

alarmed by my cynicism, and would decide never again to make critical comments even to myself. And yet there was one thing which gave real cause for anxiety.

VI

Krishnamurti's lectures were too vague to give me clear answers to any of my questions. I had been hoping to find those answers among the people who stayed at the castle and who must have known exactly what was to be understood. They were only too willing to help; but it seemed to me that they had all sacrificed their personalities in order to become members of the Order of the Star in the East. They would talk of reincarnation and *karma* with an understanding smile on their lips, as though they were speaking of the next train from Ommen to the Hook of Holland. They did their very best to copy Krishnamurti, to be kind or to make jokes and to show how jolly they were. But I did not feel that I was among doctors, farmers, schoolmasters, politicians, housewives; I was just among theosophists and members of the Order of the Star. I had expected that their new spiritual experience would have made them more enlightened about their former problems; that they would talk with greater understanding about the world at large. There were political and economic congresses, religious disputes, naval conferences going on all over the world; new movements in art, in literature, music, the theatre, the cinema were being experimented with; the world talked of unemployment and Reparations; there were thousands of things that had to be discussed, but none of them seemed to have penetrated the woods of Eerde.

One day I was told that the moment had arrived when Krishnamurti's message would be heard by the outside world, which had hitherto known it only through distorted newspaper reports. A new organ was to be founded. My opinion was sought, since I had press connections that might be helpful. The publications of the Order of the Star—periodicals, pamphlets and news-sheets—were run by amateurs, and I knew that their devotional poetry or accounts of personal visions were not likely to convince men and women used to a matter-of-fact world. Those lawyers, business men, theologians and scientists of the outside world would grasp Krishnamurti's ideas only if they could be convinced that these originated not with dreamers but with people who understood the world's needs and knew how to solve its most pressing problems.

The few people with whom the plans were discussed listened patiently to my suggestions; they nodded obligingly, and assured me that this was the right way to proceed. Yet not one of these sugges-

tions was adopted, and the events of the following months showed that a metaphorical and semi-theosophical jargon was still being employed for enlightening the world at large about the 'World Teacher'.

VII

I am sure that none but myself was to blame for my disappointment. My intellectual upbringing had made me expect a clearer message than Krishnamurti was willing or able to offer. I had not yet found in his friends and followers that inner readjustment to life that would have allowed me to accept the new message in the form in which it was offered.

I had gathered enough to realize that Krishnamurti's teaching was not Eastern—that it repudiated passivity. Everyone should find truth for himself; should listen to no one but himself; should consider unification with happiness as the final goal. But when I asked how this could be achieved I received no clear answers. It is not enough to see the summit of Mont Blanc. If we want to reach the top, we must be informed as to the most advantageous season, the best route, and details of the most suitable equipment. You asked Krishnamurti about your personal troubles, your religious beliefs, your intellectual doubts, your emotional difficulties, and he would talk to you about mountain peaks and streams running through fields. When asked about the road along which one might find happiness, he would answer: 'The direct path, which I have trodden, you will tread when you leave on one side the paths that lead to complications. That path alone gives you the understanding of life. . . . If you are walking along the straight path, you need no signposts.' But where, exactly, the direct path lay, or how we were to find it, he did not disclose. The very same day Krishnamurti might renounce all paths and say that no one path was better than any other.

I had several talks with him, and each time I eagerly looked forward to our meeting. We would talk as we walked through the woods and across the fields of Eerde. One afternoon we suddenly found ourselves in front of a charming little house, flat-roofed and rather modern, surrounded by high trees. It was Krishnamurti's retreat, where he could get away from people. He must have been very sensitive to solitude. He was not very strong physically, and the camp with its thousands of people, with daily lectures, interviews and visitors, must have been a heavy strain on his health.

I found little intellectual satisfaction either in Krishnamurti's lectures or in his books, *Temple Talks*, *The Kingdom of Happiness*,

The Pool of Wisdom and a few volumes of poetry. I admired their oriental beauty and their sincerity, but I was baffled by their vagueness. When I read:

'As the flower contains the scent,
So I hold Thee,
O world,
In my heart.
Keep me within the heart,
For I am liberation
And happiness.

As the precious stone
Lies deep in the earth,
So I am hidden
Deep in thy heart . . .'

I enjoyed the beauty of the poem; but I seemed to remember having read poems of that kind in many anthologies containing Eastern poetry, and even in those slender volumes published by young men who had come down from Oxford and Cambridge.

But we were not dealing with a talented young man whose poems had been accepted by the editor of the *Oxford Outlook*. We were dealing with a teacher who did not repudiate this title; who allowed thousands to come and listen to him and to expect guiding principles from him, and who must have been conscious of the immense responsibility that all this implied. I felt that I had a right to expect answers in a language that I could understand; in a language that was common to people of the Western world. I even felt entitled to expect perfection in everything he said or did. The unity between the content and the form was of great importance in a person like Krishnamurti. When I read:

'Thou must cleanse thyself
Of the conceit of little knowledge;
Thou must purify thyself
Of thy heart and mind;
Thou must renounce all
Thy companions,
Thy friends, thy family,
Thy father, thy mother,
Thy sister and thy brother;
Yea,
Thou must renounce all;

Thou must destroy
Thy self utterly
To find the beloved.'

I could see a glimpse of Krishnamurti's philosophy, but I felt that the same truth might have been expressed less pretentiously: 'Thou must purify thyself of thy heart and mind. Thou must renounce all thy companions, thy friends, thy family, thy father, thy mother, thy sister and thy brother . . .' If we write these lines without the lineal demarcation of poetry we acknowledge the fine statement contained in them, but we do not maintain that they are poetry. And yet I wanted Krishnamurti to write poetry that would convince people, and such as I might show to my sceptical friends.

When, after a certain time, I was able to perceive the main idea of Krishnamurti's teaching I understood that it was complete liberation, which means complete happiness. It is achieved by love and it rests within our own inherent power. Krishnamurti defined it in later years when he said: 'The goal of human feeling is love which is complete in itself, utterly detached, knowing neither subject nor object, a love which gives equally to all without demanding anything whatever in return, a love which is its own eternity.'

As far as I understand, this is the teaching of Christ, the teaching of Buddha. I asked myself, therefore: If Krishnamurti's teaching is just a repetition of the teaching of Christ, or of Buddha, then why all this theosophical background; why the Star in the East, that huge organization; why the talk of a new path; why the followers, camps and labels? Is it all humbug?

I became very fond of Krishnamurti; otherwise I should have left Eerde after the first few days. But I wanted Krishnamurti to be able to help me in my own way, and to help the other three thousand people in their own way. I wanted to be able to convince the cynic within myself that Krishnamurti was right and capable of helping, and that he had fulfilled my highest expectations. Instead, I felt uncomfortable and remained critical.

And yet there were people who perceived Krishnamurti's message quite clearly. Looking back on those days I am particularly struck by the impression Krishnamurti made on a man brought up in the rough school of English working-class life, a man matured in political battles. I mean George Lansbury. This is what the old labour leader wrote after one of the meetings at Ommen: 'I have seen the glorious march of the Socialists in Paris, in Brussels, in Stockholm and in our own country, and I have seen them sitting and standing round our platform. But I think that these gatherings

round the camp fire . . . are somehow the most wonderful sight of all. . . . When we Socialists come together, we come together pledging ourselves to fight in order to raise the material conditions of ourselves and our fellows. Round this camp fire we were listening to one who is teaching us the hardest of all truths . . . that if mankind is to be redeemed it must be redeemed through the individual action of each one of us. . . . There must be great hope for the future . . . whilst there are living in our midst those who are inspired by a great ideal—to work and toil for impersonal causes.'

I hoped that Mr Lansbury was right, and that some of the characteristics that I seemed to have found among Krishnamurti's followers were only evident when these were all together. They may have talked and behaved in quite a different manner when left to themselves in their normal surroundings. Perhaps they were really leaders in their various professions, efficient and capable of reforming their individual worlds in a direction that had disclosed itself to them during their visit to Eerde. Perhaps it was only due to blindness on my own part that even when I saw them later in London I had the same impression they had given me at Ommen.

Though I remained critical, I yet felt that I was becoming less so every day through my contact with Krishnamurti, and that only intellectual barriers within myself prevented me from accepting him as wholeheartedly as I longed to do. But even this reaction irritated me. I knew that the three thousand people who had come here were as anxious to catch his smile and were almost in a fever every time Krishnaji addressed or approached them. I had imagined myself less credulous than they.

VIII

After dinner we would drive to the camp fire in the woods. A large amphitheatre had been built there, with innumerable circular rows of seats; in their midst was Krishnamurti's own seat. This was made of large tree trunks and suggested some huge Niebelungen throne. Each time I saw it I imagined that Wotan, Hunding and substantial Valkyries must have sat in such chairs when attending a family party in Valhalla. Krishnamurti, slender, dark, rather shy, looked strange and lost on his Wagnerian throne.

Most of the people who had come to the camp at Ommen looked upon the evening gatherings as the climax of the day. Krishnamurti, stepping into the centre of the amphitheatre where a huge heap of logs and branches had been prepared, would kindle these, and stand in front for a few minutes watching the fire grow higher and higher. Then he would walk back slowly to his seat. Smoke would begin to

rise to the sky and the flames would suffuse thousands of eager faces with a red glow. Members of the audience were sitting quietly with their hands resting in their laps and their eyes shut, and you could see how deeply they enjoyed the moment. On one or two occasions the light of the flames and the last pink of a sun that had disappeared more than an hour earlier would merge into each other and produce striking colour effects in which some of the people present discovered symbolical meanings.

I have never heard Krishnamurti speak so well as he did in the evenings round the camp fire. On the whole he was not a very effective speaker; he repeated himself; he often halted; and many of his sentences were too long. In the evening, his words seemed to come more easily to him, and his voice would carry melodiously across the silent crowd, the pictures evoked by his words becoming more clearly visible.

Now and then he would end the evening with an Indian chant, which was even more impressive than his speech. Though he spoke English with mastery, you could not help feeling that English was not his mother-tongue. It was, I remember thinking at the time, the melodious quality of his voice that may have given that impression. In the evenings round the camp fire the contrast between his personality and the English language would become more striking. For he would then be wearing Indian clothes, a brown coat reaching below the knees and buttoned up to the neck, tight white trousers and white shoes, and there was no longer a gulf between the man and his words. In the unintelligible Hindustani there was the magic sound that words so easily assume in a strange tongue.

IX

One or two incidents may show what a real influence Krishnamurti had on my life. It may be considered a mere coincidence that when I met Krishnamurti for the first time, on that rainy Sunday morning in Westminster, I gave up smoking. I had smoked since I was seventeen, usually thirty cigarettes a day, and I had become something of a slave to the habit. Nevertheless I had never tried to give up smoking, because I had never seen any convincing reason for so doing. Even today I cannot explain clearly why I should have given it up the day I met Krishnamurti. We did not discuss the subject; I did not know that he himself did not smoke. And yet to give up smoking at once seemed the most natural thing.

The other incident is more difficult to describe. I had been trying for a long time to meditate in the evenings on a particular subject. I used to do it in bed before going to sleep. For months on end I would

reach a certain point in my meditation after which it would break up. Either my attention would falter or else I fell asleep before getting beyond the particular point. A few days after I had met Krishnamurti I succeeded for the first time. I experienced the feeling of sinking into a deep well. Though the well seemed bottomless I had simultaneously the two opposed sensations of going on sinking and yet of having reached the bottom. This was accompanied by a very vivid impression of light. The strongest impression, however, was of receiving at once an emotional shock and a mathematical revelation. It is difficult to describe this last sensation: no metaphor or comparison represents it correctly. Though I do not claim any mystical significance for my experience, I must add that its culminating point made me unspeakably happy. It was almost like a feeling of physical delight or physical pain. The division between delight and pain seemed lifted. How long the moment lasted I could not tell; but I imagine it to have been no more than the fraction of a second. When it was all over, I was awake and fully conscious, and I recorded my experience to myself with a feeling of deep gratitude.

The above experiences suggested that Krishnamurti's effect upon me was vital enough to act even against my intellectual resistance.

In the summer of 1929 Krishnamurti suddenly dissolved the Order of the Star, broke all connections with the Theosophical Society, and renounced all the claims that had been made in his name. He had, at last, summoned the courage to sever the ties that had held back his own spiritual convictions through so many years, and that had forced him to act in the shadow of what looked like spiritual usurpation.

The rupture took place on 3 August 1929 at the yearly summer camp at Ommen. This is how Mr Theodore Besterman described the critical meeting in his biography of Mrs Besant: 'One morning Mr Krishnamurti rose to deliver his address to the assembled campers. It could be seen at once that he was now speaking for himself and not merely as a mouthpiece; and his words confirmed the impression in no dubious manner. . . . He announced the dissolution of the Order of the Star and at one blow laid low the whole elaborate structure so painfully and painstakingly built up by Mrs Besant during the past eighteen years. "I maintain," Krishnamurti said, "that Truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect. That is my point of view and I adhere to that absolutely and unconditionally. . . . A belief is purely an individual matter, and you cannot and must not

organize it." He declared that he did not want followers . . . he made it unmistakably clear that his words were directed against those who had built up the elaborate structure for him during those eighteen years. Krishnamurti added: "You have been preparing for this event, for the coming of the World Teacher. For eighteen years you have organized, you have looked for someone who would give a new delight to your hearts . . . who would set you free. . . . In what matter has such a belief swept away all the unessential things in life? In what way are you freer, greater? . . ." Mr Krishnamurti continued: "You can form other organizations and expect someone else. With that I am not concerned, nor with creating new cages. . . . My only concern is to set men absolutely, unconditionally free." After this Mr Krishnamurti gave up all the possessions heaped upon him, and gradually severed his connection with all organizations.'

It was not difficult to perceive what courage it needed to make such a far-reaching decision. To understand its magnitude one has to remember what Krishnamurti was renouncing. There existed an organization with thousands of members; there were platforms from which to speak in the four most important corners of the globe; there was an independent commercial organization with its various publications in a dozen different languages; there were helpers among all classes of society, willing to make practically any mental or material sacrifice; there was, in short, a working machine for the transmission of a spiritual message, as powerful as any institution had ever been. To throw it overboard as though it meant nothing required courage, moral integrity and spiritual conviction.

I was glad that I had doubted neither Krishnamurti's sincerity nor his intrinsic spiritual value. The events of August 1929 strengthened the impression I had received when the young Indian entered the dark panelled room in Westminster. Had I not suddenly seen that it mattered little what his life had been up till then? And had I not felt that his personality had nothing in common with the striking headlines in the newspapers?

CHAPTER V

Portrait of a 'Perfect Master': Shri Meher Baba

'WHEN I arrived, a procession of his disciples filed out. First a bevy of beautiful young girls passed me, then several young Indians departed. Meher Baba was sitting on a sofa. He wore a dressing gown, and a soft blue silken scarf round his neck.

'He is a slender man of thirty-eight, but he looks ten years younger. He wears his dark brown hair very long. It flows down to his shoulders. . . . The chin is rather pointed and not powerful. . . . His eyes sparkle with happiness and serene joy. . . . His hands are eloquently artistic. They talk. They are hypnotic. He has immense magnetism. As I entered the room I felt a rush of personal fascination and force. . . . As he grasped my hand I felt a strange thrill. . . . During our talk he perpetually caressed me, laying his hand on mine, or touching me on the back. . . . I melted under his enchantment in spite of my caution. Meher Baba does not speak. . . . On his knees rested a small board with the letters of the Roman alphabet painted on it. His slim fingers flicked from letter to letter. . . . His interpreter reads the alphabet. . . . I had prepared a questionnaire with the help of Sir Denison Ross, the oriental scholar. It was designed to trap the teacher, but he smilingly threaded his way through it without stumbling. . . . "Do you know Gandhi?" I asked. "Yes, he is not as far advanced as I am. He asked me to help him. . . ." "Are you divine?" He smiled. "I am one with God. I live in Him like Buddha, like Christ, like Krishna. They knew Him as I know him. . . ." "Is there any way out of the world crisis?" "Yes." "How long will it last?" "Only another year." '

II

The above prophecy was published early in 1932. It was contained in an interview which appeared on the front page of the London *Sunday Express*, and was preceded by ten large headlines, two of which ran across the whole page. In the middle there was a large photograph of Shri Sadguru Meher Baba. The author of the interview was the popular British journalist, Mr James Douglas, a well-known writer of religious and moral articles.

A few weeks after the publication of Mr Douglas's article I had an interview with Shri Meher Baba. It had been arranged by one of his chief British disciples.

I arrived on a chilly spring morning at one of those large houses off Lancaster Gate, which in opulent Edwardian days might have been attractive but had become gloomy and uncared for since they had been transformed into understaffed boarding houses and residential hotels. I was received by a somewhat forbidding domestic who said that she would call 'one of them Arabs' for me; but after a few minutes a more presentable young woman appeared, only to assure me that nothing was known to her about an interview—if, however, I maintained that an interview had been arranged, it was probably so, and she would immediately inquire. A few minutes later a little Indian with a kind face appeared. He wore European clothes and had a black moustache. 'Oh yes, Mr Shri Meher Baba will be delighted to see you; he knows all about you, and it won't be a moment.' After about twenty minutes a lady appeared and asked me to follow her upstairs.

I climbed five flights of stairs, and was received on the top landing by another little man with a black moustache. He, too, had an inviting smile, and he said: 'Please, do come in. Mr Shri Meher Baba has been expecting you.' He opened the door, and I found myself in a small bedroom. The bed had not been made yet, and the furniture was typical of the smaller residential hotels in the district.

Shri Meher Baba (whom I shall call for simplicity's sake Baba) was sitting in the middle of the room in an easy chair. He corresponded in his appearance exactly to the description by Mr James Douglas, but I waited in vain for the 'rush of personal fascination and force'; I missed the 'strange thrill' when he grasped my hand, and though he 'caressed me, laying his hand on mine', I could not make myself 'melt away under his enchantment'. He was wearing a dressing-gown, bedroom slippers and a woollen scarf round his neck. He was holding in his hands the little blackboard with the letters of the Roman alphabet written upon it. Two Indians interpreted to me each of the many quick movements of Baba's flickering fingers.

Unfortunately my questions must have been badly prepared, or awkwardly presented, for the answer was almost invariably: 'This question requires a more elaborate answer and a longer discussion. I shall have to write this answer to you in a day or two.' After this had been going on for about three-quarters of an hour I decided that it would be unfair to trespass any longer on my host's time.

But, after I had turned towards the door, Baba suddenly began making more signs on his board. One of his two interpreters stopped me: 'Baba says that he is going to help you in the future.' I was taken by surprise, and though I tried to express thanks for this unsought promise, I must have done so not without embarrassment.

III

A thick letter from Baba arrived a week after my interview, containing the handwritten answers to my questions.

'The spiritual revival that you ask about', said the letter, 'is not very far off and I am going to bring it about in the near future, utilizing the tremendous amount of misapplied energy possessed by America for the purpose. Such a spiritual outburst as I visualize usually takes place every seven or eight hundred years, at the end or beginning of a cycle, and it is only the Perfect One, who has reached the Christ state of consciousness, that can appeal and work so very universally. My work will embrace everything; it will affect and control every phase of life. . . . In the general spiritual push that I shall impart to the world, problems such as politics, economics and sex . . . will all be automatically solved and adjusted. All collective movements and religions hinge round one personality who supplies the motive force—without this centrifugal force all movements are bound to fail. . . . Perfect masters impart spirituality by personal contact and influence, and the benefit that will accrue to different nations, when I bring about the spiritual upheaval, will largely depend upon the amount of energy each one possesses.' There followed several passages about the possibility of performing miracles, and on the last page I found the following sentences: 'I now take orders from no one; it is all my supreme will. Everything is, because I will it to be. Nothing is beyond my knowledge; I am in everything. There is no time and space for me, it is I who give them their relative existence. I see the past and the future as clearly and vividly as you see material things about you.'

When I read these statements Baba was on his way to the country in which he was to utilize the 'tremendous amount of misapplied energy' for the bringing about of a spiritual revival. A few weeks later I received a letter from the English disciple through whose help I had been granted my interview. He wrote from Hollywood: 'We arrived in Los Angeles two weeks ago today. Baba had a terrific amount of work there, and none of us had more than four hours' sleep a night, there was so much to be done. In addition to all the private interviews, he had one general reception given at the Knickerbocker Hotel, Hollywood, where over a thousand people

came . . . another one given to him by Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. . . . He went several times to Paramount Studios and also to Universal and Metro-Goldwyn. I am so grateful to you for your letters of introduction to Sternberg and Lubitsch. They were both charming to us. We went to Paramount to meet Sternberg and Marlene Dietrich, and the next day we motored to Santa Monica to have tea with Lubitsch. . . . Baba liked them both very much, and is looking forward to seeing them again. He also saw Tallulah Bankhead several times, Marie Dressler, Gary Cooper, Tom Mix, Virginia Bruce, Maurice Chevalier and a good many others.'

IV

At the same time there appeared an article in *Everyman* in which the editor published a biographical sketch of Baba under the title 'More about the Perfect Master'. Its main facts were: 'Shri Sadguru Meher Baba is a Persian born in Poona, South India, on 25 February 1895. . . . His father is a Zoroastrian, and Meher Baba was brought up in that religion. He went to school and college in Poona. When he was seventeen he was met by Shri Hazrat Babajan, an ancient woman, as a result of which Meher Baba entered a superconscious state in which he remained for nine months entirely oblivious of earthly life. It took seven years before he regained normal human consciousness. During the whole of that time he had to be taken care of. His return to normal consciousness was brought about in 1921.'

The strange meeting with the 'ancient woman' consisted apparently of a kiss. Baba himself described this incident in the following words: 'Until then I was worldly as other youths. Hazrat Babajan unlocked the door for me. Her kiss was the turning point. I felt as though the universe was receding into space; and I was left entirely alone. Yes —I was alone with God. For months I could not sleep. And yet I grew no weaker but remained as strong as before. My father did not understand. . . . He called in one doctor and then another. They gave me medicines and tried injections, but they were all wrong. I had lost hold of normal existence and it took me a long time to get back.'

'He spent the first two years after that experience,' continues the editor of *Everyman*, 'in writing an account of what happened to him. This book has not been seen by anyone. He never married; nor did he ever engage in any trade or occupation; for he was still at college when the experience I have mentioned came to him. His time had been spent during the past eleven years in travelling throughout India, alternating with periods of complete retirement. He visited

the West for the first time last September (1931) when he spent about three weeks in England, and afterwards went to America for a few weeks. . . . On his first visit to this country he saw a few people. . . . On the present occasion, however, the news of his coming was spread from India, and he was met on arrival with the full blast of British newspaper publicity. . . . He has not spoken for more than seven years. . . . This silence is not the result of a vow, but is undertaken for spiritual reasons. He says that he will break it soon in America.'

Baba's message can be summed up in the few words which he himself dictated to the press reporters who came to see him when he arrived in England. He said: 'My coming to the West is not with the object of establishing a new creed . . . but is intended to make people understand religion in its true sense. True religion consists of developing that attitude of mind which ultimately results in seeing one infinite existence prevailing throughout the universe, thus finding the same divinity in art and science and experiencing the highest consciousness and invisible bliss in everyday life. . . . Organized efforts such as the League of Nations are being made to solve world problems. . . . This is like groping in the dark. I intend to bring together all religions and cults like beads on one string and to revitalize them for individual and collective needs. This is my mission to the West.'

A few years after my meeting with Baba I was given an opportunity of verifying his utterances to Mr James Douglas with regard to Gandhi. I was travelling to America in the same boat as Miss Madeleine Slade, Gandhi's English disciple and companion. I asked Miraben (as Miss Slade was called, since she had become a Hindu) about Baba's conversations with Gandhi. 'They first met', she said, 'when Gandhi travelled in the *Rajputana* to England to attend the Round Table Conference. Shri Meher Baba sent round a word, asking whether Gandhi would receive him. Gandhi, of course, consented. They had a talk, and after that Shri Meher Baba visited Gandhi again in London. But you may state quite emphatically that Gandhi never asked Meher Baba for help or for spiritual or other advice. He liked Meher Baba, and he talked to him, as he talks to everyone who wants to see him—that was all.'

For a certain time I wondered whether I should not give up all further study of Shri Meher Baba, and limit myself to classifying him as one of the many 'saints' who appear every now and then in the East, and who suffer from nothing so much as from self-delusion. Eventually, however, I decided that it would be premature to do so. Every teacher has his own method, and what appears to us to be

trickery or self-delusion may be, for all we know, part of a very wise system. I was therefore anxious to find out more about Baba's methods.

I continued questioning people about Baba, wrote letters to some of his pupils, and gathered any material I could lay hands on. But no source was so enlightening as the one I came across unexpectedly in the person of a very beautiful woman in New York. She possessed all the qualifications that I had been anxious to meet with in one of Baba's disciples and that I had almost given up hope of ever finding. She had sacrificed her former life in order to serve him; she had a thorough knowledge of Baba's methods; she took part in his daily life, every detail of which she knew as she knew her own, and above all, she was intelligent.

As a young girl she had married a famous German author; at an early age she had become a celebrated actress; she had then married a prince, and had left him in order to follow Baba. She had been famous for her beauty, and she still possessed one of the most striking appearances I had ever encountered. She had an infectious zest for life, but she also revealed a certain spiritual quality which helped to explain why she should have enjoyed her greatest stage success in a drama in which she had to play the Madonna. Her devotion to Baba suggested that, as she was no longer able to play the Madonna, she found happiness in playing in real life the part of Mary of Bethany, sitting at the feet of the Master.

When I met her in New York the passion of the great actress had not left her. It might have been the centre of a stage with thousands of spectators watching her and not an apartment off Fifth Avenue in which she received me. Even her eyes and her hands were vocal. A disciplined rhythm controlled the movements of her body; her black silk dress clung tight to her figure, and to relieve the sombreness of her dress there were ropes of pearls round her throat. Her head was enveloped in a white turban of a delicate silken fabric. A heavy odour of incense pervaded the rooms; the lighting was dim, and I noticed pictures of medieval saints and other works of art which, though originally conceived as documents of spiritual devotion, had become part of a modern luxurious existence.

My hostess was Italian by birth, but her English was perfect, and she always succeeded in using the right rather than obvious word. When she quoted German she betrayed no trace of a foreign accent; her French was equally good. Carpets and rugs softened the ardent

flow of her words. We drank tea from cups made of glass, and the whole room disclosed the peculiarly opulent taste associated with Fifth Avenue.

'How did you meet Shri Meher Baba?' I asked her.

'I doubt whether that experience can be expressed in words,' she replied, and opened her hands in a helpless gesture; 'I had heard about him, but I remained sceptical. I had followed teacher after teacher. And yet none of the teachers I met could ever reassure me. Eventually I consented to go with a friend to the place where Baba stayed in New York. I entered the room in which he was sitting, surrounded by followers and disciples. That very moment an experience began, full of wonder and beauty. Suddenly I had to run through the room, and I found myself on the floor at his feet, weeping, weeping, weeping. Oh, how I was weeping! But I also began to laugh, and the streams running down my cheeks and the outbursts of laughter were one. I was resting my head on Baba's hand, and my whole body was shaken with the terrific sobs of liberation. Eventually I quietened down. Baba then took my face between his hands and looked for a long time first into one of my eyes, then into the other, and then back into the first eye. And then he spoke to me or rather made signs on his spelling board.'

'What were his first words to you?' I interrupted.

My hostess raised her head, fixed me with her eyes as though testing whether I would comprehend the whole weight of her words, and said slowly: 'His first words were: "I am man and woman and child. I am sexless." He then paused for a while, brought his face nearer to mine, and said: "Have no fear." An incredible joy went through me. I went into the next room and lay down on a sofa, weeping still with joy. Suddenly the door opened and Shri Meher Baba came in. I knew by now that my whole life had no meaning if it was not dedicated to the Perfect Master, and so I said to him, "Baba, please take me with you." But his only answer was: "It is yet too soon." I could have died with grief when he said these words.' The beautiful woman spread dramatically the fingers of one hand over her heart as though indicating that her heart had almost stopped when she had heard Baba's refusal.

'I had to try three times before he finally accepted me,' she then continued; 'I followed him to Europe, but he sent me back to America, whence I had come. You see, it was not a fit of hasty enthusiasm that made me renounce my whole previous existence, divorce my husband whom I loved and who loved me, and sacrifice my whole life and everything I possess to the Perfect Master. But I know that I was right. Today I live to serve a higher purpose instead

of living to satisfy my own little ego. Today I live in conformity with a higher plan and for higher good.'

I wondered what the fruits of the higher plan and the higher good were, but I only asked: 'How do you know?'

'How can I doubt it?' came the quick answer. 'Since Baba is the Perfect Master, he knows everything that is good; he directs everything in the universe. If I submit to his will I can only do what I, as a spiritual being, am meant to do, and not what my selfish little self always tempts me to do.'

'But does this not imply your complete submission to somebody else's will?'

'Not at all—because Baba, who knows my spiritual path, makes me only do things that come from within my nature. He does not force his will upon me, but induces me to act according to the demands of my personality.' My hostess stopped and remained silent as though indicating that all the facts mentioned by her were beyond dispute.

'How does Baba instruct his other pupils, and how does he act when, in your words, he "directs the universe"?' I asked after a while.

'He directs *maya*.'

'What do you mean by *maya*? *Maya* as the physical world, which the East believes to be nothing but an illusion?'

'Exactly, *maya* in its orthodox sense. Baba employs those illusions to destroy other illusions of our worldly life.'

'Can you illustrate this?'

'Of course I can. Let's assume that a friend of Baba's is in danger of being drowned in a lake. Baba, though hundreds of miles away, knows of the imminent danger. He will ask his pupils to bring a basin of water; he will put his hands into it, and by doing it he will influence the water of the lake, thus producing there certain conditions that will save his friend.'

'And you really believe all that?' I interrupted.

'Of course I do,' she answered with such determination that I no longer felt like expressing any doubts.

My hostess was, in a way, nothing but Baba's mouthpiece, more explicit than Baba himself. I could not have wished for a more perfect source of information, and it was not for me to decide whether she was suffering from self-delusion or to what extent the admiration of such a fascinating woman had turned Baba's oriental head.

'Please tell me,' I asked, 'how does Baba spend his days?' In the opinion of my hostess Baba had a place at the very top of some

mysterious hierarchy. It was interesting to know how such an exalted being spends his days.

'He gets up very early,' was the answer, 'hours before the rest of the household. He takes a very hot bath, and his hair is attended to with the greatest care. He is, as you must have noticed, extremely tidy in his appearance, and no one can imagine the amount of time spent over the washing, combing and brushing of his beautiful hair. He then goes from room to room, stops for a while in front of every bed, looks at the sleeping person, and, no doubt, directs in his own way the life of the disciple for the rest of the day. Many activities follow: newspapers, a huge correspondence, interviews.'

'Does he read much?'

'He never reads books, but he knows everything.'

'But he reads newspapers, doesn't he?'

'Yes, he reads them, or rather they serve him as a medium for directing the daily destinies of the world.'

'Destinies of the world?' I whispered.

'Yes, you see, Baba does not read a paper. He just goes over the headlines. But while doing this he places his hands and fingers on the printed lines'—she illustrated Baba's movements with her own expressive hands—'and through such a contact with the print he affects the results of events described in the article.'

'He does that?'

'Of course he does', she answered, and went on demonstrating the way in which a 'perfect master' directs the events of our world. 'Perfect Masters work in many different ways,' she went on; 'and Baba uses many things in life as transmitting stations for directing events. He also uses us, his disciples, for his work. He spiritualizes the world by creating certain spiritual centres in various parts of the world: they serve as transmitting stations for Baba's spiritual radiation. Generally he has groups of twelve in every one of these centres.'

'What other methods does Baba employ?' I asked.

'He works in many different ways, for example in the cinema. We go very often to a cinema, at times even twice or three times a day. Of course the actual film does not interest Baba. But when the audience is so absorbed by the film that it has given up its inner resistance, he can work upon it in his own way.'

'Is he fond of music?'

'Indeed he is. And of the theatre too. We often have to play for him special plays written and produced by ourselves. And we have to make music for him. Sometimes we have only a gramophone, but he does not mind it, as long as it is folk music: Spanish, Eastern, Negro or Russian music. He has little use for classical music.'

There was only one other point on which I wished to be enlightened. 'Do you know Baba's attitude,' I asked, 'towards other teachers, towards men like Krishnamurti, Steiner, Ouspensky or Keyserling?'

'Oh, he does not mind them. He knows their exact position in the spiritual world and the whole of their teaching without bothering to study it. I remember his actually making a statement with regard to Krishnamurti. He said that Krishnamurti possessed great possibilities within himself and that he is on the right path; but he won't fulfil himself or become truly great as long as he does not come to visit Baba. You see,' she concluded in an almost apologetic tone, 'everyone, even a person like Krishnamurti, needs the personal contact with a Supreme Master. Otherwise he cannot fulfil himself.'

VI

Though I had not quite succeeded in perceiving the significance of Shri Meher Baba, some people believed in his mission and the power of his saintliness. This book would be incomplete without the portrait of a man who believes himself to be a 'perfect master', and who shows how easy it is to impose an imaginary picture upon others. In a world in which there is a Steiner there must also be room for a Shri Meher Baba—for the world of spiritual research contains as many kinds and degrees as any other world.

CHAPTER VI

Miracle at the Albert Hall: Principal George Jeffreys

EVERY year early in the spring the same large poster appeared in the streets of London. It portrayed the head of a youngish man with curly hair; and it invited you to the Albert Hall on Easter Monday to attend a healing service in the morning, baptism in the afternoon, and holy communion in the evening. The organizers were the Elim Foursquare Revivalists.

I often used to pass these huge posters, without feeling tempted to heed their call, but a religious movement powerful enough for its

supporters to hire the Albert Hall year after year eventually excited my curiosity, and in 1934 I decided to attend the meetings.

I went to buy my ticket a week beforehand, and the obliging young man at the box office informed me that the seats in the stalls were free, and that I could secure any of them by arriving early enough on Easter Monday, or preferably on Sunday night.

I arrived at the Albert Hall soon after 10, on a brilliant Easter Monday morning, to find a jumble of taxis, bath-chairs and even ambulances in the street outside. In the crowd there were people on crutches, men and women with deformed limbs or with bandaged heads or eyes, mothers with sick children in their arms.

The long circular passages inside the building were full. Most people wore their Sunday clothes, and many had arrived with their entire family. They seemed well provided with sandwiches, chocolate and oranges. The crowd in the passages was getting denser, yet the prevailing spirit was festive and good-natured, and the crowds took the heat and the pushing laughingly as a part of their holiday pleasure.

The hall was already more than half full, and just as I was trying to find a seat, the organ began and the four or five thousand people broke into a hymn. The tune was not at all what you would have expected at a religious service, and as for the words, they ran:

'There never was a sweeter melody,
It's a melody of love.
In my heart there rings a melody.
There rings a melody. . . .'

The hall was filling quickly, and long before 10.30 there was not a seat left. Middle-aged women predominated. The stalls and the rows round the platform were filled with young Foursquare Gospellers. The boys in dark suits and the girls in white dresses wore round their shoulders a striped sash of silk, bearing the words 'Elim Crusader'. The audience consisted mainly of working-class people. Many of them had come from Wales, from Yorkshire, from the Midlands. Food, and bottles containing tea or coffee, were stowed under the seats.

Lilies, daffodils and red azaleas formed a decorative frame in front of the platform and the organ. The masses of yellow daffodils must have created a familiar atmosphere for many in this audience, bringing a feeling of intimacy even into the vast Albert Hall. The vivid red azaleas might have been chosen to create a festive atmosphere, and to stir the emotions.

Men only were sitting on the platform. Some wore clerical collars, and all of them were dressed in dark suits. The hymns were now conducted by a man standing in the front row on the platform. Nearly all the ten thousand people joined in and sang:

'There'll be music at the fountain—
Will you, will you meet me there?
Yes, I'll meet you at the fountain,
At the fountain, bright and fair. . . .'

When the leader at the microphone began to sing, with a smiling face,

'Faithful I'll be today,
Glad day, glad day!'

his last few words, carried across by the loudspeakers, were drowned by the joyous response from ten thousand throats,

'And I will freely tell
Why I should love Him so well,
For He is my all today.'

II

The man whom ten thousand people from all over the British Isles had come to see and to listen to had mounted the platform quite unobserved. Though my eyes had rarely left the platform I did not see the entry of George Jeffreys, the founder and leader of the Elim Evangelists, and I only discovered later that he had been sitting for some time among his friends in the front row. He, too, was wearing a dark suit, and there was no mark to distinguish him from the others. I saw through my binoculars a strong face with rather a soft mouth, and dark curly hair, but nothing calculated to play upon the emotions.

The moment Jeffreys began to speak the impression of impersonality disappeared. He came up to the microphone to say a prayer, and at the sound of his very first words there came into my mind the same thought that I had had some time earlier when I met Kerenski for the first time. The voice of Jeffreys was strong, but not so aggressive as Kerenski's; it was a baritone, and full of the euphony which we are accustomed to find in a Welsh voice. Kerenski's voice had the dramatic quality of the typically Russian bass, but it lacked the humanity of the voice at the microphone. I have been told by people who heard Kerenski when he harangued the masses during the Russian revolution that his main asset was the deep ringing sound of his

voice, and that had his vocal cords been unable to produce this far-reaching sound, the history of Russia might have taken a different course. I did not doubt that the strong and sincere tone of the voice of Jeffreys was responsible for much of the veneration in which his followers held him. There was in it the reassuring note of fatherly advice and the attraction which we are told has its roots in the subconscious reactions of sex. A George Jeffreys with a high-pitched tenor might never have become known.

After praying, Jeffreys addressed the audience for the first time. He held a sheet of paper in his hands and said: 'We have just received an answer to our telegram to H.M. the King. I will read it: "George Jeffreys, Albert Hall, Kensington. The King sincerely thanks you for your loyal message on the occasion of the ninth annual meeting of the Elim Foursquare Gospellers. Private Secretary." '

When Jeffreys came up to the microphone to say another prayer I began to understand why ten thousand people had come to listen to him. He was not a high priest but simply one of the people. Between them and their God there stood no priest in sacramental vestments; there was no complicated ceremony. They communicated with God without the help of symbols that had no meaning for many. The man who spoke to God in their name did not address Him in Latin or in the archaic words of a centuries-old Church. God approached in that way did not seem very distant.

In the intervals of praying the platform assumed the character of a committee room. Telegrams arrived, were read and others dispatched, letters were opened, messengers sent out. Yet the whole procedure suggested a big family gathering rather than an office.

The hall became silent when Jeffreys stepped forward once again to deliver his message. The contents of his message were not new. At times their crude fundamentalism was irritating. So was the somewhat childish emphasis on the necessity of real baptism instead of 'the pagan Catholic sprinkling of children', as Jeffreys called it. But I was struck by the way in which he spoke. The Bible was obviously the source from which he had derived his powers as a speaker, and he spoke with the persuasiveness that can be derived only from full identification with the Bible. The man who has identified himself with the spirit of the Gospels speaks as though from another level.

After his message Jeffreys called people who wished to be baptized. Though the gestures of his hands were not particularly marked, they seemed almost to pull people down from their distant seats high under the roof of the hall. At first one or two voices sounded in the general silence, and in the vast auditorium they were like the voices of children. But they 'broke the ice'. More and more people—five,

ten, twenty, fifty—cried out that they wanted to be baptized. Jeffreys listened attentively to each one of them, and to each he exclaimed, 'God bless you'. The baptism was to take place in the afternoon.

III

In the meantime the stalls were cleared in preparation for the healing service. The sick people descended into the stalls from all parts of the hall. They came down slowly one by one, many with the aid of relatives or nurses. Those of them who could kneel, knelt down on the floor; others remained in their seats, and a few in their bath-chairs.

The climax of the morning had arrived. Jeffreys came down from the platform towards the sick, of whom there must have been some four or five hundred. He was followed by one of his helpers bearing a little receptacle containing oil, and by a few women who were there to assist the sick. Jeffreys approached them one after another, anointed their foreheads or merely put his hands on their heads, leant over them and uttered a few words. Though their eyes were shut they did not exhibit any signs of exaltation, and many of them had a faint smile on their lips. Some of them had raised their heads and had opened their hands as though waiting for God's healing power to flow into them. Many remained in the same position after Jeffreys had laid hands on them, but some began to sway to and fro for a while, and had to be helped by the attendant women. A few fell down on the floor as if in a dead faint, sometimes at the very moment Jeffreys touched them—sometimes after he had left them.

While the organ played softly, the vast audience looked down on the stalls. There was none of the morbid curiosity that crowds generally manifest when confronted with something outside their usual experience. They were sitting quietly, many of them with tears running down their cheeks; some prayed silently, others prayed aloud with clasped hands. In one of the farthest rows of the stalls there was a woman in a bathchair, with a nurse at her side. I had already noticed the woman once or twice: all through the morning she had been sitting motionless in her bathchair, but now I noticed some excitement around her. Supported by her nurse she was half standing in her chair, her face bright red and covered with beads of sweat. She was raising her arms in slow, backward movements, performed with great difficulty, which suggested some odd gymnastic exercise. She exclaimed time after time, loud enough to be heard all round: 'I can move them now, I can move them'. She went on moving her arms in slow circles; and in her face there was an expres-

sion of such terrifying excitement that I had to force myself to go on watching it. This expression suggested neither hysteria nor joy, but rather an awfully intense curiosity and surprise.

I left the Albert Hall and went home for lunch.

IV

When I came back in the afternoon, George Jeffreys was sitting on the platform in a black gown, the organ was playing and hymn after hymn was sung. Jeffreys got up and asked people to testify to their healings in the years gone by, and voice after voice cried back from different corners of the hall, stating its individual case. I spoke to several of these people afterwards. They were workmen, artisans and small tradesmen, and it was difficult to doubt the honesty of their testimony. As I discovered later, hundreds of the most striking cases had been collected in book form, together with the original reports, and photographs of the subjects. In the course of half an hour the following healings of the last nine years were testified to:

33 cripples,
17 people who had been blind in one or both eyes,
77 people who had suffered from tumour, growth or cancer,
40 consumptives.

Some of those healed could not be prevented from coming down all the way to the platform to state their case. One middle-aged man with a dark moustache climbed up on to the platform, anxious to give an account of some dreadful disease he had been cured of by Jeffreys only a year earlier. He was beaming with self-contentment, and spared no detail of his illness, revelling in the horrors of his previous sufferings with such obvious delight that I almost suspected he was sorry to have been healed. At the end of the gruesome tale he cried out, 'Hallelujah, praise the Lord', and stepped down from the platform with the expression of a tenor who has just acknowledged the applause of an enthusiastic audience after his big aria.

I attended the baptismal service a few months later at a meeting at the Crystal Palace. The summer meetings there had become as much yearly occasions for the Elim Gospellers as the Easter meeting at the Albert Hall. The vast grounds in front of the Crystal Palace were gay with red flowers and green lawns. This time there were over twenty thousand people. I arrived during the interval between

two meetings, and many people were wandering through the halls. The stall in the middle of the main hall, reserved for the exhibits of the various branches of the Elim Movement showed that Elim revivalism satisfied other needs of its followers besides the religious. A large part of the stall was reserved for the books by Jeffreys and various of his pastors; next to it the weekly magazine of the movement was on sale; large posters showed the various branches of the Foursquare Gospel Church: one of them said 'Elim Holiday Homes', another 'Elim Bible College', a third 'Crusader and Cadet Movement', a fourth 'Foreign Missionary Branch'. In one part of the stall a gramophone played hymns, and young girls were selling gramophone records.

The meetings had begun at ten in the morning, and they were going on till nine at night. There were prayer meetings, choir meetings, lectures, healing, baptism, holy communion. At times there were two meetings simultaneously. The refreshment rooms were crowded and on the grass slopes just in front of the building many people were sitting among food baskets and bottles just as if they were on holiday at the seaside. The whole occasion was extremely 'British' and in the intervals the people clung together in groups as English crowds always do on holiday.

Singing was an outstanding feature of all the meetings, and I do not remember having seen a man or a woman who did not take part in it. Nothing seemed to make them so happy as singing. They sang the glory of God and they no doubt believed every word of their hymns; but they also shouted at the top of their voices, revelling in the physical enjoyment of 'letting themselves go'. An old gentleman with a withered face, snow-white hair and a pair of old-fashioned steel-rimmed spectacles no doubt felt entitled to express himself as loudly as he could, whether he was asked to or not, and each time Jeffreys put, during the delivery of his message, an obviously rhetorical question the old gentleman would shout his reply. 'Who died for us on the Cross?' came the speaker's words from the platform. 'Jesus Christ, our Lord!' was the answer flung back to the platform by the white-haired gentleman. 'What can the Lord do for us?...' Jeffreys continued... 'Save us' came an answering shout from the shrivelled lips.

For all the obvious enthusiasm of the crowd it seemed surprising that they could stand the strain of a full day of such concentrated religion. Later I asked one of the pastors present about it. 'Meetings like this', he replied, 'are the greatest impulses in the life of these people. They are like an electric current that charges the batteries for months to come. When the batteries have run down a bit,

another meeting will charge them. People simply live for months in the memory of these days. They are the greatest joys of their lives. Most of these people will feed on the fare given them today when they return to their London slum, to their work in factories in the black towns of the Midlands. . . . During all those months they will have something to look forward to—next Easter at the Albert Hall.'

For the baptismal service, I decided to make use of my special ticket, and to witness the baptisms from the platform. I had been promised a meeting with George Jeffreys, and this would probably be the most suitable meeting ground. The platform for the baptismal ceremony was erected in the bandstand in the middle of the grounds and fronting the Crystal Palace. When I arrived at the bandstand a young man with the pink face of a cherub was playing hymns on a little organ. The cherub was none other than George Jeffreys' secretary, with whom I had been corresponding for some months.

A small canvas water tank had been erected in the middle of the bandstand. Jeffreys, with five or six young men dressed like himself in grey flannel trousers and cricket shirt were standing near by. About fifteen or twenty young women in mackintoshes were grouped just outside the bandstand. In front of it were assembled over twenty thousand people. The first two rows were occupied by some sixty men and women who during one of the morning services had expressed their wish to be baptized. They looked like a local cricket team that had somehow got mixed up with the members of a ladies' swimming club. The women wore white rubber bathing caps, long white garments and white shoes; the men wore grey or white flannels, cricket shirts and white shoes.

The converts were led one by one into the tank, where Jeffreys and his helpers, standing in the water up to their waists, awaited them. One or two of the white figures shivered when they stepped into the water. Among the first to enter were a number of families. Jeffreys would put one of his hands on their backs and duck them with his other hand. While doing this he would say loudly: 'On the confession of thy faith I baptize thee in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, Amen.' Some of the converts walked out of the tank briskly and smilingly, as though saying 'how jolly'. Most of them were serious; a few let themselves be led out of the tank with their eyes shut tight and their hands folded in prayer. A few collapsed, and had to be carried by the girls in mackintoshes. Most of them shivered, and it was most gratifying to see that the girls in mackintoshes provided them with wraps or overcoats before leading them into the building, where they were presumably warmed and dried.

VI

After the baptismal service I was at last allowed to meet George Jeffreys. 'I am afraid it was very hard to persuade the Principal to see you,' said one of his helpers coming up to me: 'he never sees anyone unconnected with his work. He does not even receive gentlemen who write for the press. I don't think he will be able to give you more than five minutes.'

When I shook hands with Jeffreys I saw for myself that the man who had such power over the largest masses seemed painfully shy. He obviously hated himself for having promised to receive me. His day had been filled up till now with one healing service and two baptismal services, besides sermons, prayers and the constant guidance of over twenty thousand people. Another healing service, one or two other services including holy communion were still to come. Jeffreys looked slightly older than he had seemed from a distance. In the corners of his mouth there was a trace of sadness that reminded me of a similar expression in the mouths of Rudolf Steiner and of Krishnamurti. Was it a result of the inner experiences that precede a spiritual attainment?

I disliked interviewing Jeffreys as much as he disliked being interviewed, and I did not know how to begin. Nor did the surroundings help me much. The vast and bare room was modestly called 'the ambassadors' room', and we sat at a table long enough to accommodate all the foreign Ambassadors accredited to the Court of St James'.

After we had eventually exchanged a few preliminary remarks, I asked, 'How did it come about that you knew the possibility of divine healing?'

'Through personal experience. I was healed myself as a boy. The impression was terrific.'

'Do you mean the mental or the physical impression?'

'The physical impression. It was like an electric current that struck my head.'

'Are you quite conscious of what you are doing when you lay your hands on people's heads? Is it you who heal them or do you consider yourself just an instrument?'

Jeffreys looked at me for a second as though surprised at the question, and then he said: 'Of course it is the power of God that works through me. I claim no powers of any sort. It is the Lord who manifests Himself through me. I am nothing but His work. I can only say with the Master, "I can of mine own self do nothing. . . . I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."'

'So you don't think your healing has anything to do with the mind of the sick themselves?'

'The one teacher I believe in is the Lord. I believe in the Gospels from cover to cover and in all the fundamentals of the Christian faith. I accept the Bible in its entirety as the word of God. The sick must have faith, must pray, must hope that they will be healed. But it is not the effect of mind over matter that manifests itself in healing. It is solely and only the power of Christ over disease.'

'Is it true that you believe in the second coming of Christ?'

'I do with all my faith, and I see the signs of His second coming. I see them in the last war, in the unrest of the world, in crisis coming after crisis.'

When we shook hands to say goodbye, he was looking much more at his ease. After he had gone I was left in the room by myself for a few moments, and I could not help wondering how many educated Englishmen know anything about George Jeffreys, the man who has made thousands of their fellow citizens happy and has restored their faith? I myself knew nothing further about him than that which I had seen with my own eyes. It was only later and through prolonged efforts that I learned more about his life.

VII

Outside of his work George Jeffreys led the life of a recluse. I began to make friends with people who had come to his meetings for several years; I talked to one or two of his pastors. Each one of them told me a little, but none of them knew more than the most obvious events in the life of the 'Principal' as they all called him. Eventually I asked his secretary to lunch and begged him to talk.

My guest had been with Jeffreys for the last six years; he was his secretary, his leading musician and one of the three members of the revivalist party which, headed by Jeffreys himself, conducted the large revivalist campaigns. 'When you are with the Principal you always feel the presence of God', my guest said. 'You feel it in the Principal's modesty, his simplicity, his humility. We four all live together, we travel together. Yet there is always that feeling of divine presence when the Principal is with us. He has probably healed more people than anyone alive; few people in the world get such huge crowds for their meetings as he does; the largest halls in the towns we visit are too small to accommodate all the people who want to come. People worship him because they feel the divine presence in him; and yet he is as simple as though he were no one in particular.'

'You have revivalist campaigns only in the British Isles?'

'No—though the Principal is concentrating at present on Great Britain. Yet there is hardly a day without letters arriving from India, South Africa, Canada, America, and from practically every country in Europe, asking the Principal to come. They guarantee his expenses, and they promise a lot of money; but the Principal never accepts money as the price of his coming. We went to Switzerland this summer because a friend of the Principal at Bienne had been asking him for many years to come. We spent three weeks in Switzerland. We held our meetings in the biggest churches or halls of the chief towns, and people stood outside for hours waiting for the Principal to come out after the meeting was over. And often we had three meetings a day. This happened at Bienne, at Geneva, Basle, Berne, Zurich.'

'In which country did Principal Jeffreys begin his movement?'

'In Northern Ireland in 1915.'

The family of George Jeffreys lived at Llynvi Valley in Wales. They were religious people, and it had always been the young boy's great ambition to become a clergyman. He was coached for a ministry in the Welsh Congregational Church, but paralysis threatened to cut short both his work and his life. Speaking of those days Jeffreys says: 'My weak state began to manifest itself in facial paralysis down one whole side. . . . I knew that unless a miracle was wrought in me, life was to be very short. When my mouth began to be affected, the one thing that distressed me greatly was the possibility of my not realizing the one call and ambition of my life—the Christian ministry. From the earliest days of childhood there was the consciousness borne within me that I was called to preach the Gospel. When this affliction came it seemed as if the end of all that was worth living for had come—there was no other purpose for me in life if I could not preach.' The doctors predicted that the boy could not live more than a few years.

But he had always believed in healing through faith. The words of the Bible, 'I am the Lord that healeth thee', cast an almost mystical spell over him. Jeffreys considers that the course of his life was changed by a miracle, which happened one Sunday morning. The family were kneeling in prayer in their sitting-room, and the boy offered up a special prayer for health. He had never doubted the truth of God's words with regard to healing, and when I asked Jeffreys what he had prayed for, he answered: 'I reminded God of His promise in Exodus.' Suddenly he felt the shock which he had described to me during our first conversation. 'I can only liken the experience', he stated on another occasion, 'to being charged with electricity. It seemed as if my head were connected

to a most powerful electric battery. My whole body from head to foot was quickened.' The face and body were suddenly restored to a normal state. Today Jeffreys shows no trace of any facial or other ailment.

The wave of strength and joy that flowed through the boy was followed instantly by a feeling of compassion. Jeffreys believed that in the act of healing God revealed Himself to him and showed him the right direction. His aim was now to go into the world and to preach the word of God—no longer as an ordinary preacher, but as the teacher whose office had been described in the Gospels by the words: 'They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover', and this passage in St Mark became henceforth the young man's crucial doctrine.

Once his faith had been proved and his decision made, the establishing of the most suitable external forms became merely a matter of time. The Elim Foursquare revivalism had spiritually come into existence on that Sunday morning at Llynvi Valley in Wales. Jeffreys chose the name of his movement from the Bible. 'It signifies the four-sided aspect of the Gospel of Christ . . . the cardinal truths of the doctrine held by the movement, namely: Jesus the Saviour, Healer, Baptizer and Coming King.' The name Elim, too, was taken from the Bible: 'And they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.'

In 1915 the new movement had not extended beyond Northern Ireland. Jeffreys did not bring it over to England till after the war. At first it consisted merely of revivalist campaigns in different parts of England. Each campaign brought new members. Later on as many as ten thousand people were converted in one town during a single campaign. Between 1919 and 1934 Jeffreys opened about two hundred churches in the British Isles. He has his own theological college; he has ordained over a hundred and fifty ministers for his churches; and he supports thirteen missionaries in foreign countries. The most important activity of the movement is, however, the series of campaigns in the different towns, where even the largest halls are always filled. Crowds, like those I had seen at the Albert Hall and the Crystal Palace, queued up hours beforehand in order to get into the Queen's Hall and the Alexandra Palace in London, the City Temple in Glasgow, the Royal Dome in Brighton, the Ulster Hall in Belfast, the Usher Hall in Edinburgh, the Bingley Exhibition Hall and the Caird Hall in Dundee.

'Is your movement self-supporting or has it got rich patrons?' I asked my guest.

'We are entirely self-supporting, and we have enough money to run our churches and all the movements connected with Elim revivalism. But most of our congregations belong to the poorer classes. The Principal himself hasn't got a penny of his own. Our pastors naturally get their salaries like any other minister in England. The Principal just gets his expenses paid; that's all. As he has no hobbies of any kind, does not smoke or drink, does not travel except on our campaigns, his expenses amount to very little indeed. We three members of his revivalist party don't get any wages either, but the Elim movement pays for our expenses. I personally should not know what to do with money. None of us would.'

'Does Principal Jeffreys go to the theatre, to concerts? Does he read?'

'He only reads books on religious subjects. Practically only the Bible, which he studies constantly. He is not interested in the theatre, art, politics. At least I have never heard him talk about them in the six years that I have been with him. His spiritual mission occupies all his attention, all his thoughts.'

'Doesn't he ever take a rest?'

'Rarely. In most years there are meetings every day. We visit town after town, and there may be several services a day. Nevertheless none of us seems to get tired, and people remark how healthy we all look.' Indeed, my guest looked as though he had just returned from a holiday. Yet he was in the midst of a large campaign in the London suburbs, that would take three weeks, and there were meetings every night. I remembered that the other helpers of Jeffreys whom I had met at the Crystal Palace had looked equally healthy. 'I suppose it is the joy of our work', my guest went on, 'that keeps us so well. It is a constant invigoration.'

'Who writes your music and your hymns?'

My guest blushed. 'We use certain old hymns, but most are written by our own pastors. Some of the music I have written myself. Somebody has to. . . . Parts of our music are taken from tunes of the moment. We believe in letting people sing music that has a nice familiar sound. After all, there is no reason why God should prefer gloomy or solemn tunes to jolly ones.'

My guest drank no wine at lunch and after the meal he did not smoke. 'Doesn't your movement allow drinking or smoking?'

'We have no definite rules. We ourselves do not drink or smoke, but if any members of the Elim Church want to do either they may. The Principal, though such a strict follower of the Bible, does not believe in compulsion. The Lord can be present among us no matter what rules we have and how we dress up. The Principal himself is

hardly conscious of such things as clothes and outward ceremonies. You have probably noticed that he came for the baptismal service in a black gown. He is supposed to wear it in the water all through the service. But almost every time the same thing happens. He suddenly remembers that the gown hinders him in the water, and so he discards it, and walks into the tank in grey flannels and shirt. Some people would probably say that an important service should be treated with greater reverence. But for the Principal the thing that matters is the power of the baptism and of Christ's words.'

VIII

I remembered this informality in Jeffreys and thought how strongly it contrasted with his seriousness of speech which had proved particularly striking at the Crystal Palace after my interview with him. Later in the afternoon I had gone to attend the healing service. Though I had seen one at the Albert Hall, I wanted to watch Jeffreys more closely this time.

Jeffreys was walking from row to row of several hundred people who were sitting or kneeling in the front of the hall, waiting for his approach. Though he was as concentrated as ever, he would often laugh aloud when exclaiming 'Hallelujah'. This time I could see Jeffreys very clearly when he put his hands on the heads of the sick. I doubted no longer that he had no deeper knowledge of his own performance, and that he was merely a 'medium'. I could hear every word he said, and he never repeated the same words twice running, though some of them occurred with greater frequency than others. His most frequent invocations were: 'Pray to the Lord' or just 'Glory' or 'In the name of the Lord'. But he also spoke to the sick when stooping down to them: 'You are shut in with God', or 'Concentrate on Jesus Christ', or 'The power of God is within us', or 'The power of God is here to heal'.

Many people collapsed the moment the hand of the healer had touched their head. I spoke to several of them, and this is what one of them told me: 'The moment the Principal had approached me and had laid hands upon me, I was struck by such a powerful shock that though I was perfectly conscious I could not help falling down as if dead.' I had watched them from quite close, and had noticed that they had indeed fallen, like felled trees. They remained stiff and motionless on the floor for several minutes. Yet when they were able to get up, they did not seem at all giddy but perfectly conscious of their surroundings. In most cases they exclaimed 'Hallelujah' or 'Glory'. And yet two or three men had remained on the floor in the stiff attitude of a corpse for over ten minutes.

When the healing ceremony was over George Jeffreys stepped into the middle of the hall and began to sing a hymn. The congregation was sitting and standing about him, and now he was literally a member of it. After each verse he stopped to say a few words, addressed directly to the people around him: 'Do you all feel now the presence of our Lord? Do you feel how He is now with us, here in this very hall?' His voice sounded even more earnest than before and he seemed deeply conscious of what he was saying. He went on with the hymn and stopped again after the next verse. Now he spoke to the people in the remoter corners of the hall: 'Don't try to come more forward. The Lord is in your corner of the hall as much as in mine. He is with us everywhere. He is in each one of us. Shut your eyes. Concentrate on the Lord. Open yourself so that He may enter into you.' He went on singing and the people sang with him. Then he spoke again: 'Do you feel how wonderful the presence of the Lord is? Do you now feel the joy, O the happiness of having the Lord with us? O Jesus Christ our Lord, we thank Thee for Thy presence and for Thy help, and we rejoice in it with all our hearts. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.'

The people who an hour or two before had been scrambling to get tea, who had been making jokes during their picnic, were standing with closed eyes, with faces that were happy but tense. They had always known that God is everywhere and in everyone; but it had been a problem for them how to find Him. What Jeffreys did was to compress their consciousness of God, to vitalize it, to force it into a concentration that was more powerful than any state they were able to achieve by themselves. Jeffreys forced their God to emerge from the shadows of their longings, and to manifest Himself in their conscious feelings. Their faces suggested that they were living at this moment in God. The one great miracle of all religions seemed to have happened: God had become a part of man's consciousness.

CHAPTER VII

The Man whose God was a Millionaire: Dr Frank Buchman

WE were supposed to meet at luncheon. I was very much looking forward to a conversation with the man who had succeeded in winning over so many English people to an American revivalism and who seemed to wipe out racial, religious and social differences wherever he went.

Dr Buchman was sitting not far from our table, lunching with two elderly ladies. He was short, stoutish and benevolent-looking, with a smile on his thin but firm lips and with a pair of extremely bright, keen eyes that were always watching something from behind rimless spectacles. The only thing he did not suggest was religion. He might have been a bank manager or a successful American impresario. This discrepancy between his looks and his vocation only increased my desire to meet him.

No hosts could have been more charming or more obliging than the six or seven leading Buchmanites who put me at my ease immediately, and treated me as an old acquaintance. There were a Scotsman, a South African, an Englishman and three Americans among them; one of them was an engineer, one a university lecturer and one a clergyman. They were a cheerful lot and rather more affectionate with one another than is usual among British or American men. They called one another by their Christian names, and referred to Dr Buchman as Frank. There was something boyish and rather engaging about them, and it was only towards the end of luncheon, when I began to put inquisitive questions, that they became more reserved.

I had attended a meeting of the Buchmanites the evening before, and another that very morning. I had seen hundreds of enthusiastic people fill the huge reception hall of the Hotel Metropole in London and enjoy wholeheartedly their latest religious experience, so I was no longer quite ignorant of what the new movement stood for.

Before we finished luncheon, one member of our party crossed over to Dr Buchman's table and conversed with him for a minute or two. I imagined that Dr Buchman was to join us after lunch,

but he passed our table and, giving me first a somewhat inquisitive look and then a kind smile, walked on. Afterwards I saw him in the lounge having coffee with a lady whom I recognized as the wife of a well-known peer.

I do not remember what excuse was given to me, but unfortunately I did not meet Dr Buchman; I was promised an interview another time.

II

Dr Frank Buchman claimed to be the descendant of a certain Bibliander who was the successor of Zwingli in the chair of Theology at Zürich. He was born in 1878 at Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, took his degree at Muhlenberg College, and became Lutheran minister at a church in Philadelphia. He started later a settlement house for poor boys, but had to leave it after some differences with the trustees. During a visit to England in 1908 he had a 'vision of the Cross', which determined the whole of his future career. It did not take place at Oxford, as most people believe, but at Keswick. 'He wandered one day', related Mr J. M. Roots in his *An Apostle to Youth*, 'into a little country church where a woman was speaking on some aspect of the cross. He does not know her name, but something in what she said stirred him to the depths, and he saw himself for what he truly was . . . for the first time in his life he felt the power of Christ as an inward reality.'

Soon afterwards Dr Buchman came to believe he had discovered within himself a new power. One evening during a visit at Cambridge, while walking with an undergraduate, he found he had 'changed the life' of his young friend. This episode may well have given him the first glimpse of his future mission.

For the next few years he was the secretary of the Y.M.C.A. at an American State College, and it was during that period that he began to evolve the principles of the Oxford Group Movement, or, as he sometimes called it, 'A First Century Christian Fellowship'. In the words of the American author, Alva Johnston, he then 'perfected himself in the great art of extracting confessions from adolescents'. In 1916, he became extension lecturer at an American Seminary, and from 1917 till 1919 he stayed in the Far East. In 1921, he went to Cambridge and, in fulfilment of the request of two friends in China, visited their undergraduate sons. Three undergraduates whose lives he 'changed' went with him on his first crusade to Oxford. In rooms at Christ Church he spoke of the lives he had changed from 'selfishness and lust to purity and service'. In August of the same year the first European 'house-party' took place at Cambridge.

Thenceforward the movement grew rapidly both within and without the universities. 'House-party' succeeded 'house-party' and the name of Dr Buchman became renowned.

He chose the English universities for his movement because, in the words of his followers, 'they are the most neglected and ill-handled field of spiritual endeavour'. Though the university authorities hardly encouraged the new movement, it grew steadily under Buchman's efficient leadership. In organizing his movement he proved to have a shrewd notion both of publicity methods and of English psychology. He was tactful, quiet, discreet, industrious and never lacking in new ideas. He was clever enough to keep in the background without, however, allowing the reins to pass from his hands. His financial talent enabled him to put his movement on the sort of basis of which other movements dream in vain. Dr Buchman countenanced the luxurious mode of living among the groups, though this was held by many to be incompatible with a movement which claimed to be purely spiritual. Buchman did not share that opinion, and when asked one day why the groupers always stayed at such 'posh' hotels only answered: 'Why shouldn't we stay in posh hotels? Isn't God a millionaire?'

In his quiet manner he approached everywhere the right sort of people whose names, means or connections were of use to his movement. This method was extended to the right choice of undergraduates, and, according to Alva Johnston, 'even in the College the Buchmanites concentrate on apple-cheeked boys of wealth and family. . . . But it is a sound principle that has caused the Buchmanites to show less concern for the shaggy oafs than for presentable youngsters with influence in the college communities'.

In 1926 Buchman entertained Queen Marie of Rumania in a house owned by John D. Rockefeller, jr., in New York. He knew, no doubt, that certain women love being scolded by men, especially if they are not dependent upon them, for when the Queen asked him what her main sins were, Buchman answered with a tactful smile: 'Pride and self-satisfaction.' The Queen was most impressed, and allowed him to hang yet another royal scalp round his waist—the scalps of ex-King George of Greece and King Prajadhipok of Siam were hanging there already. Buchman realized that it paid to satisfy the snobbishness of his followers even in their religious pursuits. The list of his titled patrons and followers was bound to impress the average sinner who found himself all of a sudden sharing sins side by side with bishops, members of the Upper House, and women of title.

On the other hand, certain serious-minded people who failed to

see the necessity of marrying religion to society were shocked. Their opinions were summarized in a letter from the Bishop of Durham to *The Times*, published in 1933. The Bishop stated that many people had written to him about Buchmanism, expressing 'disgust at the toadying to rich and prominent individuals, at the unscrupulous and even unwarranted use made of well-known names'. This, however, could not deter Dr Buchman from unswervingly following his own road, and helping his movement to grow in what Mr Ken Tw tchell, his charming American right-hand man, called in a conversation with me 'geometrical and no longer arithmetical proportions'.

'House-parties' and campaigns in foreign countries were the main channels through which Buchmanism sought to conquer the world. 'House-parties', one of Dr Buchman's inventions in which society and religion can be blended together, are large semi-religious gatherings; 'guests are treated as guests . . . gloom is conspicuous by its absence, and there is more laughter . . . than at many ordinary social gatherings'. 'Groups are held in the living-room, and people are free to go or not as they choose. Informality is the order of the day. . . . The object of the house-party is frankly to relate modern individuals to Jesus Christ. . . . Bible study usually takes up an important part of each day. Separate groups for men and women . . . provide an opportunity for discussion of various problems connected with sex or money . . .' (J. M. Roots). Besides a big yearly house-party in the summer at Oxford, there were others in various parts of Great Britain, in the United States, South Africa, Canada and in most continental countries. 'House-parties' took place in university colleges rented for that purpose, in big hotels at popular spas, and even in the private country houses of rich members. Games, motor drives and dinner parties formed an important part of these gatherings. Miss Marjorie Harrison, a serious student of Buchmanism, sums up these house-parties in her entertaining book *Saints Run Mad:* 'When they are not eating,' she says, 'they are meeting, and when they are not meeting they are confessing their sins. . . .'

When I asked Mr Ken Twitchell about the approximate size and growth of Buchmanism, he only gave me a faint smile and made a nonchalant gesture with one hand, as though saying that the movement was beyond counting the number of its converts. There were Anglican bishops, American millionaires, Scandinavian magnates, colonial dignitaries, sport celebrities, elderly hostesses, movie stars, Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Oxford group, which was probably one of the largest modern religious movements.

Dr Buchman's young friends kept promising that I should see him

'as soon as Frank has finished the present house-party'. But as these parties seemed to be following one after another, no meeting could be arranged, and the cheerful young men comforted me meanwhile with their latest publications and with impressive stories of recent conversions, described in their phraseology as 'changed lives'. In the summer of 1934 they asked me to join them on their Scandinavian campaign in the autumn, during which I should be able to study those aspects of their movement that might have escaped my attention in England, and I was sorry that lack of time prevented me from joining them.

III

'The Oxford group has no membership list, subscriptions, rules. It is a name for a group of people who . . . have surrendered their lives to God and who are endeavouring to lead a spiritual quality of life under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.' The main methods by which the groupers believe that we can achieve such a life are:

'1. The sharing of our sins and temptations with another Christian life given to God, and to help others, still unchanged, to recognize and acknowledge their sins.

'2. Surrender of our life, past, present and future, into God's keeping and direction.

'3. Restitution to all whom we have wronged directly or indirectly.

'4. Listening to, accepting, relying on God's guidance.'

IV

A cheerful, simple and unintellectual revivalism such as Buchmanism should appeal not merely to twenty or thirty thousand British people but to a hundred times as many.

Unfortunately the groups believe that they must cut themselves off from all criticism and they forget that not all criticism is antagonistic. This superiority or fear suggests an inner weakness. It seems that even within the movement criticism is not tolerated. Miss Harrison, who knows the groups intimately, states that 'Criticism from outside is combated not by a defence—for criticism is desperately feared—within the group criticism is absolutely forbidden.' If this is true, then the groups almost deliberately cut themselves off from the thinking section of their sympathetic observers.

One of the first things that alienate many friends of Buchmanism is its assumption that there is only one road to truth, happiness and Christian life, and that this is the one prescribed by Dr Buchman. 'Truth is not the exclusive possession of any group or society', says

Mr R. H. S. Crossman, one of the most serious students of Buchmanism.[1] 'The chief accusation levelled against the critic of the groups is spiritual pride, but is exclusiveness so very different a sin?' he asks.

Let us examine some of the principles of Buchmanism.

Strangely enough, sin is its entire basis. It has even led to a schoolboyish explanation of the word 'sin'. We are told that 'in the "I" in the word sin lies the secret of sin's power. The I or the ego is more important to sinners than spiritual health. . . . If we can surrender that I to God, sin goes with it; when we live without that I in our lives we are without sin.'

Though the 'I' in sin is considered by the groups as man's greatest enemy, in practice it plays the predominant part in Buchmanism. All the confessions of the groupers are built round the former wickedness and the present salvation of the I. Every confession can be reduced to the formula: 'Formerly I did that, and then I did something else, and eventually I surrendered, and now I do only this.'

Should a religious revival ever be based on the idea of sin? Constant preoccupation with certain ideas makes them real to us. The majority of serious teachers tell us that one way of eliminating the evil within us is by neglecting it and by concentrating instead on what is good. When in certain parts of Burma a man approaches his hour of death, people assemble in his room and remind him one by one of all the good deeds he has ever performed. Should not modern revivalism be based on a similar attitude?

VI

'Surrender', or the conversion of a sinner, is the first commandment of Buchmanism. In the terminology of the groups, 'Surrender to God is our actual passing from a life of sin to a life God-guided and Christ-conscious . . . it is the giving up of our old ineffective spiritual lives and taking on of a life of spiritual activity in everything we think, do or say. . . .'

There are various anomalies in the movement which weaken the principle of surrender. Thus we are asked to effect our surrender through the hands of youngsters whose knowledge of life is practically nil. We are expected to surrender in all the glare of a public ceremony. A hilarious public performance is surely not the perfect background for such a mysterious act as man's surrender to

[1] *Oxford and the Groups.*

God. Surveying surrender as practised by the groups, Mr Crossman notices 'the appalling danger of giving such specialized pastoral work to young people of no experience', and 'the risk of the release, when achieved, being of short duration'. 'In their recent American tour,' he continues, 'the groups on at least three occasions . . . found the work of conversion far harder in towns where they had previously worked: still more significantly at Louisville, where two years previously hundreds had made their surrender, they had found only eleven who had remained in any sense active members.' Miss Harrison thinks that 'it is a healthy sign that so many of the Buchman converts fall away quickly'. It seems sad that it should be so, though it must be admitted that through 'the irresistible temptation to collect conversions, and to magnify past sins for the sake of the effect they create . . . truth is bound to be sacrificed to effect.'[1]

VII

Most important after surrender is sharing, the 'telling of, or talking over, our sins with another whose life has already been surrendered'. Sharing, which plays the paramount role in Buchmanism, offers us the main key to its understanding.

Sharing of sins is certainly very helpful to some people. By adopting and systematizing the practice of confession, the Roman Catholic Church has dealt more effectively than any other religious body with that problem, and the discussion of such personal matters as 'sin' forms an important part of the educational system of various esoteric schools. But this is done after the most careful preparation and in the most restrained language. Both in the Roman Catholic Church and in esoteric schools confession is always treated with the utmost discretion and discrimination.

My first experiences of sharing as practised by the Buchmanites surprised me greatly. I was sitting in the packed hall of the Hotel Metropole, asking myself constantly whether I hadn't come to the wrong place. The flavour of the whole performance was one of amateur theatricals, and other serious-minded people with whom I discussed my experience told me that they had carried away exactly the same impression. There were one or two hesitant and genuine confessions—but on account of their triviality even they failed to be impressive. What was one to say when a girl of about seventeen got up and confessed that she had 'made a broad survey of religion', had realized that no religion 'was any good', and that Buchmanism was the only true faith that could give 'spiritual happiness' . . . and when a thousand grown-up people clapped their approval? Most of

[1] *Oxford and the Groups.*

the confessions had all the signs of a carefully prepared performance. Though the production was clever, the utter lack of reverence made it singularly ineffective. Jokes were made with the regularity of those in a vaudeville theatre.

My original suspicion proved justified when I went to other meetings and discovered that the same young men and women confessed the same sins, repeating the same jokes, forcing the same laughter and the same interruptions from a *claque* distributed cleverly in the hall. But that was not all. The young men and women who were supposed to have adopted a 'Christlike' quality of life—absolute honesty and truthfulness—were often not honest. There were distinct variations in the same confessions made by the same people. These variations were so small that the inexperienced listener would hardly have discovered them. In one instance, the sum involved in a particular confession was £5, next time it became £10; likewise the character or extent of certain confessed sins such as minor frauds, lies, motoring offences, was rarely exactly the same at different meetings.

There was no doubt about it—either the whole confession was an invention, or an original little misdeed was twisted round, exaggerated and treated with little respect for truth. And yet those confessions were supposed to be the genuine and spontaneous expressions of a sinner who had at last recognized God and felt bound to share the joy of a newfound happiness with others.

There were, of course, confessions that appeared to be honest. They mostly dealt with such trivial matters or were expressed in such a way that it was impossible to take them seriously. A few examples may suffice.

1. 'Sharing' in rooms at one of the universities. A youth of about twenty, with a very serious expression on his face, got up and confessed: 'My trouble was the weather.' Long pause. 'Formerly I used to be worried by the weather, wondering whether it would rain or not. I used to go constantly to the window, looking at the sky. Since I have surrendered, and listen-in to God every morning, I no longer worry about the weather.' He sat down, and remained serious for the rest of the meeting.

2. Another undergraduate: 'My sin was self-abuse. Formerly I always had a bad conscience, because when I indulged in self-abuse I accompanied it by wicked thoughts. Since my surrender I no longer need to have these thoughts.' No one blushed; no one even smiled.

3. A young girl confessed a trivial sin which she overcame by what she modestly explained as, 'I put Christ to the test, and Christ gave the victory.'

4. During a visit to New York the story of the following instance

of 'sharing' was making the round. A famous young hostess and her butler had been 'changed' and became ardent Buchmanites. During one of the largest group meetings in New York the lady got up to confess intimate details of her matrimonial life and her differences with her husband. After her the butler got up, confessing former sinful thoughts about his mistress, speaking of his former spying upon her and elaborating matrimonial details previously divulged by the lady. The lady was the mother of several children who were at school, and her husband, as yet 'unchanged', occupied an important and most respectable position in New York.

Nothing upset me so much as the hilarity that accompanied most of the confessions. Dr Buchman always instructed converts preparing for their first public confessions in the way they should speak, and he then stressed the paramount importance of being hilarious. At first I refused to believe this to be true, but later these instructions were confirmed by his own fellow workers and published by Miss Harrison in her book. Once you comprehended that schoolboyish lightheartedness, naïveté and good fellowship were responsible for much of the success of Buchmanism, you perceived why hilarity was indispensable.

Hilarity was a natural expression of Dr Buchman's own character; but his followers exaggerated it in the same way in which they exaggerated when they spoke of his character. They used such phrases as 'Merriment bursts through the shaving soap', 'Astir with the birds', 'Crows with joy'. Mr A. J. Russell, author of *For Sinners Only*, and the leading historian of the movement, says of Buchman that 'whatever he does he feels is right'. After such a statement one feels inclined to agree with the *New Yorker* which says: 'The picture of radiant, soapy and laughing Buchman is, of course, elaborated in order to offset the suspicion that there is something unhealthy and lugubrious about the movement.'

Dr Buchman's friends constantly spoke of those 'bouncing' and even 'crackling' qualities of 'Frank', and thus simply force us to look out for these features in their leader. His praises are sung and printed in all the books of the movement. 'The extent of his (Buchman's) tireless devotion to work for Christ', we are told by the author of *What is the Oxford Group?* 'will never be fully reckoned by any man.' Thousands of men before him have suffered, sacrificed themselves and died in the service of Christ.

But let us go back to 'sharing'. The usual procedure of a 'sharing' meeting is described by Alva Johnston. 'The washing out,' he says, 'to use the Buchmanites' technical term of confession, starts on a seemingly accidental note with mild or slapstick confessions; talking

back to a traffic cop, overspending the weekly allowance. . . . The confessing is then stepped up a little, to the smuggling through the customs of ear-rings in a jar of cold cream. . . . At about this time a *claqueur* breaks down, pleads guilty to an error in a parked car and tells how buoyant he feels because he has confessed it. If the ice is well broken some lad may now turn State's evidence against a governess or upstairs maid. . . . If the party grows warm, it may seem almost discourteous to the hosts not to contribute a few scarlet reminiscences. . . . The backward ones are exhorted to brace up, be men, play the game, and pull their weight in the boat by furnishing the company with their fair share of purple memoirs.'

I could never make myself leave a sharing meeting without feeling ashamed that one of the holiest things should have become the subject of play-acting.

'Many persons, of whom I must admit that I am one,' says Dr L. P. Jacks, the author of an important paper on Buchmanism, 'have a strong feeling which is probably instinctive that our sins, whether great or small, are not a proper subject for publicity. . . . It is a sense of decency. . . . There is something in many of us that shrinks from spiritual nudism.'

VIII

This brings us to the very important subject of silence. Dr Buchman's oldest fellow worker, Mr Loudon Hamilton, expresses the demands of his movement in the following words: 'We must learn the secret of living and working together. We must be willing to share not only our time, our homes, our money, but to take down the mask and reveal our moral and spiritual struggles.'

Buchmanites are never left to themselves, never work by themselves, are supposed never to keep anything to themselves.

Can it possibly be the aim of a religion to destroy all privacy, so essential for serious work, for real thought? Is it not one of the distinctions between man and animal that the latter prefers living in families or herds whilst man likes to withdraw into himself every now and again, to listen to the voices of what Dean Inge calls 'higher reality'? The social ideals of the Buchmanites seem to be beehives and ants' nests.

Silence is an important element in all religions. Not only does natural modesty make us keep a great many things to ourselves, but there is also that inborn fear of speaking before thought and feeling have taken final shape. The silence of the mystics is the very opposite of the endless flood of words which accompany sharing, confessing and changing other people's lives.

The only form of silence advocated by Buchmanism is that obtained during 'guidance'. This is 'direct communication from God', and 'the Holy Spirit taking a normal intelligence and directing it in the fullest harmony with His will for the good of the individual and of his neighbours'.

'Each morning', we are told, 'opens with a time of quiet, during which thought is directed towards God in full conviction that . . . He can make known His will.' To achieve this the groupers sit and 'listen in' to God with a pad and pencil ready to write down His instructions.

All through human history man has tried to get into touch with God. We know from the Bible what effect God's voice had upon Moses, and we know how Jesus Christ prepared himself before he went to speak to God and hear His voice. As far as we know, only a limited number of exceptional men, mystics and saints, can claim to have been constantly or at will in direct communication with God.

God has given us our mind and our will so that we may use them in daily life and make our decisions according to their commands. To sacrifice our mind and our will in order to let God decide whether we should have another piece of cake or put on the new green tie strikes ordinary people as blasphemous. This is, however, the way Buchmanites treat guidance. Not even the most trivial decision is taken without asking God for guidance. We are told (in *For Sinners Only*) that Dr Buchman 'asks guidance for expenditure on postage'. When Dr Buchman enquired at a big hotel in Canada about rooms for a house-party and was informed that the price would be 12 dollars a day per head, he answered that 'God had told' him to pay no more than 3.50 a day. We are told by Miss Harrison that at a house-party which she attended the members were instructed to 'ask God's guidance as to the amount' they 'should tip the hotel servants'.

The whole subject of group guidance was most admirably summed up in the following sentence in a leading article in *The Times:* 'Most of what is put forward as guidance received in these periods of relaxed attention is so trivial that it would be impious to ascribe it to the promptings of God.'

IX

It is not difficult to find the reasons for Dr Buchman's success. Public confession is not new in religious life, for emotional, self-contented people delight in confessing their sins. Public confession is a form of exhibitionism common among people with little self-

control. Many British people love to hear from the Hyde Park orator of his religious, political or moral faith; they love the confession of a former agnostic at a revivalist meeting who now spends his days singing hymns and praising the Lord. There are many people who love speaking of their former wickedness in front of elegantly dressed ladies and gentlemen.

Intellectual simplicity is another reason for the success of Buchmanism. The simple, hearty character of Buchmanism appeals to the rugger player, the hardened business man, the more 'sporting' kind of clergyman. To be able to combine religion with slapping one's neighbours on the back, telling them stories—even though under the guise of public confession—and getting into direct communication with God without racking one's brains must be very tempting to most sinners.

Dr Buchman showed great tactical acumen when he decided to remain within the Church. Many a priest has been worried in the years following the war about the dwindling attendance of young people at church. In Buchmanism the clergy are confronted with a movement that by its heartiness, play-acting and emotionalism makes religion attractive to many young people. It is not at all surprising that several Anglican bishops have joined the ranks of Dr Buchman, and that many English clergymen see in him a powerful supporter, to whose doctrine they subscribe willingly.

This rather uncritical support on the part of some clerics may be one among the reasons for the groups' unwillingness to accept any criticism, and for their belief that they are above it. Why was I never allowed to make a definite appointment with Dr Buchman? I was still in touch with some of his assistants who must have known that my sympathy with their movement was not uncritical. They continued to assure me that a meeting would be arranged without further delay, but a pressing question was generally met with such answers as 'Frank has just gone off to Switzerland', or 'Frank is taking a cure at Baden-Baden', or 'Frank has only just come back from a house-party in Norway'.

The groups assert that their methods can solve most problems of modern life. One of them is sex, and the groups boast of many sex cases, especially in England, in which their method was more successful than any other. Young men, particularly undergraduates, testify over and over again that Buchmanism has solved this problem for them. It is never stated quite clearly in what way this has been achieved, and we can only go by the statements made by the official

representatives of the movement. 'The sex instinct', we read in Mr Roots' pamphlet, 'is at bottom a God-given one; and while the groups do not condone any perversion of thought or word or deed, they know that the real problem is not one of suppression but one of control and sublimation. . . . The cure lies ultimately not in mere human force of will, but in the cleansing stream of spiritual life that follows upon a genuine conversion.'

No one could deny that the sex problem is fundamentally a spiritual one, or that it can be solved spiritually. On the other hand it is doubtful whether the 'cleansing stream that follows upon a genuine conversion' has really the power to eliminate all the sexual difficulties of youth once and for all.

We can understand the attitude of the Buchmanites towards sex only in its connection with the corresponding attitude of the Englishman at large. Sex is not as important a problem in the life of an Englishman as it is in the life of most foreigners, and sublimation of sex thus comes more easily to him. Suppression of sex through sport and other methods taught by English education and the conventions of English life has been practised for generations and has led eventually to an inner fortitude, the result of which is the comparative sexual indifference of most Englishmen. Many an Englishman suppresses or, as the Buchmanites call it, sublimates his sex instinct and leads it into other channels without subscribing to the methods advocated by them. The successes of sex sublimation in the Oxford group would have been more impressive if they had been achieved among members of those nations in whose lives sex *really* plays a predominant part. Five 'sublimated' Arabs, Italians or Frenchmen would prove the efficacy of Buchman's sex methods more convincingly than five hundred English undergraduates. But we look for them in vain, and can merely acknowledge that the sex salvation of Buchmanism is being achieved merely by the undersexed.

XI

The groups are said to have been instrumental in the bringing about of a racial understanding between certain sections of the South African population. A less doubtful achievement of the Oxford group is the fellowship that has been created by and within the movement. People who formerly were left to themselves, or who were unable to kindle within themselves a feeling of friendship and altruism, began to develop these virtues. The qualities of collaboration and understanding will probably remain as the only contribution of Buchmanism to modern life.

As to the elimination of racial prejudice I can only judge from personal experience. During one of the meetings I attended, a titled German woman spoke of the wonderful results Buchman had produced in her country: peasants and landowners, soldiers and storm troopers, workmen and students were gathering together to exchange their spiritual experiences and to establish a common basis of a Christlike life. 'What about the common basis and fellowship between the Nazis and the Jews?' someone in the audience shouted out. 'What about the understanding and lack of class distinction between Nazi Buchmanites and former intellectuals, and socialists, and liberals, between Nazi Buchmanites and non-Nazis?' The poor lady blushed violently and did not reply, but the inquisitive gentleman was more or less shouted down. When sceptical listeners made a similar enquiry at other meetings the result was the same—except that in most cases they were no longer allowed to finish their question.

This is where the movement seems to be failing: it claims too much and it advertises its successes too widely without ever admitting its failures. I was rather shocked when I picked up one day a book of famous murder cases and found in it a detailed report of a notorious trial in which the accused was a Buchmanite. The unfortunate case only showed that one can be a grouper who has 'surrendered, changed, shared and restituted' and even converted the sinful lives of other people and yet remain, to say the least, a crook. The famous Buchman crusade that went out in 1929 to 'change' South Africa included a certain young Englishman, D. M. This grouper remained in South Africa, eloped with a young girl, and was charged in the autumn of 1931 at Maritzburg with murdering and robbing a native taxi-driver. After a long trial he was acquitted of the murder, but was found guilty of 'a number of lesser offences, including fraud and forgery. He had not long stepped from the dock when he was rearrested on these charges. . . . He pleaded guilty to charges of forgery and fraud. . . . At the close of the trial D. M. was recommitted to gaol on a warrant from Johannesburg which alleged additional charges of fraud against him.'

It would be absurd to forge a link between D. M.'s felonies and his being a Buchmanite, but the groups claim that it is sufficient for a man to be 'changed' to ensure in that man's life thenceforward all the Christlike qualities. The South African case suggests that no one has the right to make such claims, for we are entitled to ask: did D. M. commit his various frauds in accordance with 'guidance' obtained in his 'quiet time' or was the life-changing power of the groups so weak that it did not prevent him on such important

occasions from acting on his own? It is dangerous to put the idea of divine guidance into the minds of inexperienced youths unable to distinguish between the voice of their conscience and that of their deeper desires. 'I can only say,' writes Mr Reginald Lennard, fellow and tutor of an Oxford college, in the *Nineteenth Century*, 'that I have known Oxford for three years as an undergraduate, and have worked in Oxford as a college tutor for some twenty-two years, and it seems to me that of all the movements . . . almost, if not quite the most depraving in its ultimate tendency, and the most insidiously inimical to the formation of fine character, is the group movement which Dr Buchman has brought us from America.'

XII

The groups believe that they can solve social and economic problems as easily as religious and sexual ones. We are told a lot about the happiness that Buchmanism has brought into the lives of thousands of people; of the fellowship that exists within the groups among Communists, Fascists, and others; of the greater understanding between the employees and employers where the latter have become groupers. There is no doubt that the groups have indeed helped in thousands of individual cases. But can they solve, as they claim, any of the burning problems that involve not a few thousand individuals but humanity at large?

J. B. Priestley, who has never left any doubt as to the sincerity of his preoccupation with social conditions, expressed in 1934 his opinion of the methods of the groups for the solution of social problems. 'I do not think', he wrote, referring to a Buchmanite publication, 'I should have considered this pamphlet worth writing about—if it had not contained a paragraph headed "A Message to the Unemployed". In this paragraph the writer suggests that the movement is capable of doing more for the unemployed than can be done by anything else in the world. Not only can it bring them a spiritual comfort . . . it will bring them jobs again. This seems to me mischievous doctrine. If young men from Oxford and Cambridge like to confess their sins to one another, to listen-in to Heaven and go charging round Canada and South Africa in a state of hearty priggish self-complacency, that is their affair and not ours. . . . But when such people begin to talk nonsense of this kind to the unemployed it is time to protest. All new religious movements . . . are soon able to acquire funds. But it is quite another thing to assert that the business of the nation . . . can be put in order by the same easygoing methods. This is where the mischief begins. . . . There is no divine plan for keeping children in poverty and misery . . . until

the hour when all undergraduates confess their sins and stop casting lustful glances upon barmaids.'

Mr C. R. Morris, another student of the group, says that 'All the appearances are that the group leaves its members at most vaguely interested in these things (social problems). It will stand as a hindrance to simple but necessary improvements in the common affairs of life. . . .' (*Oxford and the Groups*).

It seems as though Dr Buchman's preoccupation with the financial and social side of his movement had made him forget the urgency of many social and economic problems. Two friends of mine visited him one day to discuss a business matter. When he told them that he had just come back from a group meeting in the East End, one of my friends expressed surprise at the quarter. 'Oh, I suppose we must have the poor with us', was Dr Buchman's reply.

The groups acknowledge that the problem of money is connected with the problem of social injustice. 'Money and possessions are treated as belonging to the whole category of material things which are not in themselves either evil or good' (Roots). This is a very sound statement, and equally right is the conclusion drawn from it that 'to a man trying sincerely to do God's will rather than his own, and seeking daily guidance towards this end, there is no problem either of pride in receiving for his own needs or of miserliness in giving to supply the needs of others'. Optimistic detachment from money matters is good—but it is not enough to solve the economic problems of a nation. It is difficult to judge whether such an attitude —no matter how right in itself—would have been kept up by the groups had Dr Buchman been a less ingenious organizer. 'Without him', says R. H. S. Crossman in *Oxford and the Groups*, 'the movement would certainly not have the money to spend that it now has. There are at least thirty wholetime workers, living, and living comfortably, on contributions. It has been calculated that the last American tour must have cost more than £25,000. It is this money, and Dr Buchman's organizing powers, which support these professional evangelists. . . . The remark made by one young evangelist, "I always wanted this kind of life: big hotels, comfort, powerful cars, and the best people—and as soon as I get changed, God gives them all to me!" is not mythical, and it is a warning.'

Dr Buchman's private income does not exceed, in his own words, £50 a year.

XIII

Most of the failings that must needs shock many serious observers could easily be cured if the Buchmanites listened to well-meant

criticism and if they admitted that, in a revivalism catering rather for the 'better classes', emotions must be blended with intellect. The contempt of the groupers for intellectual conversation surprised me each time I came in touch with any of them. A movement that has adopted the name of one of the most distinguished universities in the world and yet expresses contempt for all intellectual methods or discussions, becomes, to say the least of it, incomprehensible.

Undoubtedly the simpleton finds his way to heaven more easily than the 'brainy fellow'. Millions keep away from church—not because they are irreligious, but because they experience genuine difficulties in accepting uncritically the message of the churches. Buchmanism preaches that we ought to give up all intellectual preoccupation with spiritual matters and base our lives solely on faith, when Buchman's message of happiness will become an actual life force in our existence. This may be true, but unfortunately most people find it difficult to accept a new primitive gospel blindly. The acceptance of a religious belief is not like that of a toothpaste or a brand of tobacco. Our religious needs are not easy to locate or to define and cannot be fed with a formula. The desire to doubt and to investigate new tracks is an inborn instinct.

The intellectual needs of most of the groupers I met seemed so limited as not to worry them at all. Theirs was not the kind of intellect that loves probing to the root of a question. They were perfectly happy to accept one thing as sin, another as God's voice, and a third as something equally clear-cut and undeniable. If I questioned the truth of their assumptions they only answered: 'You'll see that it is so the moment you are changed. Surrender will open your eyes.' It was rather like the answer of the Nazis in Germany who would always stop any argument by saying, 'Hitler says it, and so it must be right'. The groupers boasted about Dr Buchman 'persisting in his custom of refusing to argue about intellectual difficulties' (*For Sinners Only*).

None of the Buchmanites I came in touch with seemed to know much about other religions, philosophies or spiritual systems. People of their kind could easily be converted to almost any creed. As there are few people with exacting minds and independent spiritual ambitions—and millions without either of these—it can be assumed that Buchmanism will go on offering a spiritual haven to many more sinners.

Conversation with groupers invariably turned to stories of changed lives, to some 'topping' confession or restitution. Literature, art, music, politics, economics, might not have existed. Each time I tried to introduce a topic unconnected with group activities, they listened

politely for a few moments, but, after that, their faces became blank, and their former cordiality gave place to that cool reserve that I had noticed at the end of my first luncheon at the Metropole.

The intellectual attitude of the groupers is best illustrated by their schoolboyish love of certain word concoctions. Dr Buchman himself is the main inspirer of such a representation of spiritual truth. Thus he explains the word Pray as:

Powerful
Radiograms
Always
Yours

The letters of the name of Jesus are used by him to form the sentence Just Exactly Suits Us Sinners.

The Times summed up the intellectual attitude of the groupers in a leading article: 'It must be the most serious charge against the groups that they encourage their members to shirk the discipline of thought in favour of impulses received from they know not where.'

XIV

Even a year after Dr Buchman gave me that encouraging smile his young friends were still assuring me that I should meet him soon. I heard from one of his lieutenants that he had 'stressed the urgency of the matter' in a letter to Buchman's right-hand man Ken Twitchell. Though Dr Buchman was at the time in London and though he was receiving in those weeks several titled ladies, I waited in vain for the urgency of the matter to take effect.

No one could have a grudge against Dr Buchman for preferring the visits of titled ladies to those of inquisitive authors. Nevertheless I am sorry I was never given the opportunity to talk with him, for I should have liked to tell him that since he has stirred the imagination of thousands of people, he might consider how to transform a philosophy for undergraduates and elderly titled ladies into one for more serious people as well. And I should have told him how delighted I was to have met the most successful and shrewdest publicity agent of our time.

CHAPTER VIII

War against Sleep: P. D. Ouspensky

Two years after the first world war Claude Bragdon, an American author, received the following telegram from Washington: '*Tertium Organum* interests me passionately. Desire very much to meet you if possible. Leaving for England end of month. Viscountess Rothermere.' Though Mr Bragdon found it impossible to go and see the lady in Washington, he wrote in reply that he would be delighted to receive her at his home. She accepted his invitation.

The cause of the lady's excitement was a book which she had picked up on the bookstall of some railway station on her way to Washington. She could hardly wait to know more about the ideas expounded in it and about the personality of the author. His name was foreign and offered no key to his whereabouts; but as Claude Bragdon's name appeared on the title page as that of the translator, she chose what seemed the most direct way.

She arrived duly at Rochester and her first question was: 'Where is Ouspensky?' Mr Bragdon answered that Ouspensky was at the moment in Constantinople. 'Why doesn't he come over to Europe, to England?' asked the impatient lady. Claude Bragdon had to explain that the times were not very propitious for Russian émigré authors who wrote bulky volumes on metaphysics, who had a family to support, and who would certainly find it difficult to make the long journey to England, no matter how much they might welcome such a change. The lady suggested that a certain sum of money might be sent immediately to Constantinople to enable Ouspensky to visit England. Claude Bragdon happened to know that Ouspensky had friends in that country and that he very much wanted to visit it. He sent the money to Constantinople and soon afterwards the author of *Tertium Organum* landed in England.

Claude Bragdon himself told me this story in his impressively slow sad way.[1]

Though *Tertium Organum* was a metaphysical book, it had the

[1] Claude Bragdon gives a detailed and most interesting account of this incident in the chapter 'The Romance and Mystery of *Tertium Organum*', in his book *Merely Players*, published by Alfred Knopf, New York, 1929.

success of a popular novel, and exercised a strong influence on a great many people, especially in England and the United States.

'What made you translate *Tertium Organum*?' I asked Claude Bragdon.

II

'In the spring of 1918,' he answered, 'there appeared at my door a young Russian, Nicholas Bessaraboff. He had brought with him a Russian book for which he thought no praise could be too high. I had to read it, and I, too, became very enthusiastic. We decided to translate it together into English. He wrote down the translation word by word, and I had to make sense of it and to put it into intelligible English. We worked together for a very long time, and eventually I published the book myself. It had a very great success immediately, and sold for almost a year at the rate of a hundred and fifty copies a week, though it dealt with metaphysics and cost five dollars a copy.

'It took me a long time to find out where the author lived and where to send him his royalties and a copy of our translation. I gathered from his letters that he was enthusiastic about the publication of his book and its success, and that he wanted to come over to the States. He had lost everything in the Russian revolution, and in those days every foreigner visiting America for the first time had to find an American who would undertake a financial guarantee for him. I was unable to do this, but I wrote to Ouspensky and told him that, as his book was such a success, something was bound to turn up. Before my letter had reached him, Viscountess Rothermere arrived, and we were able to send him money for his journey to England.'

III

Tertium Organum, which introduced the name of a hitherto unknown Russian author to Western readers, was called by its author 'A key to the enigmas of the world'. It was one of the very few books which, though introducing glimpses of the occult world into our conception of life, nevertheless was based on scientific investigations. It dealt with such subjects as 'Mathematics of the Infinite' or 'The Mystery of Time and Space', but it was not theoretical, and most of its astounding discoveries were based on personal observation. This personal element in a mainly scientific book was rather new at the time, and may account for part of its success.

Tertium Organum (the 'third canon of thought') was written before the war. Even more startling was Ouspensky's next book *A New Model of the Universe*. This volume of almost a quarter of a million words presented an entirely new conception of the world, in which purely spiritual discoveries were placed side by side with purely physico-scientific ones. The *New Model* cannot possibly be analysed here; and Ouspensky, moreover, had himself developed beyond some of its ideas, which were conceived mostly before the war. The book dealt with subjects ranging from yoga to Einstein's Relativity; with the Gospels, the study of dreams and a new theory of a six-dimensional universe. It was too scientific to follow *Tertium Organum* as a best seller, and too unorthodox in its whole conception to be accepted immediately by the necessarily slow and conservative machinery of official science. Ouspensky's positive attitude towards 'hidden' knowledge was convincingly balanced by his intellectual perspicacity and his scientific training. Here was a book that could be compared with Rudolf Steiner's best: the author displayed at once the same spirit of scientific detachment and the same open-mindedness with regard to spiritual knowledge which is not yet accepted by science; and though many of the purely scientific and mathematical parts were a closed book to me, I was told by experts that they were as new and as convincing as the less scientific sections. By the time I had reached the last page of the book, over which I spent an entire month's holiday, I understood the impatience of Lady Rothermere, who had been 'passionately interested' in *Tertium Organum*.

IV

After prolonged enquiries I succeeded in finding out that Ouspensky was living in England and holding classes in London. He seemed anxious that his classes should be attended only by those who felt a genuine need for such knowledge as is suggested in his two books. I was eventually asked to come to one of his lectures. It was to be the beginning of a new cycle; I should be able to study his method from the very beginning.

The meeting took place in a private house in Kensington. A lady with radiant eyes and the high cheekbones of a Russian was sitting in the front passage at a little table. She asked me my name, and wrote it down on a sheet of paper under a number of others. The lecture was to take place in a big room on the ground floor. About forty people were sitting facing a little table and the chair of the lecturer. The room had plain striped curtains and walls painted in a sober mauve-grey. Except for a vase of mother of pearl with a few branches of cherry blossom and two modern brass trays on the mantelpiece,

the room was undecorated. Next to the lecturer's table there was a blackboard, on which were the words 'Psychology as a Study of Objective Consciousness.'

The room filled up within five minutes, and altogether there must have been about seventy people present. They suggested a continental rather than a London audience: there were more men than women; most faces were rather intellectual; there was none of the elegance which one meets at occasional intellectual gatherings in Mayfair; neither were there any of the dark-coloured shirts and affected voices of Bloomsbury. I knew three of the men by sight: two of them were well-known professional men and the third was a peer, a fervent patron of the arts. There were a number of men and women in the early twenties, but middle-aged people predominated.

Ouspensky entered the room almost unnoticed. He was white-haired, clean shaven, above middle age, stout, bespectacled, and he walked up to the table, sat down, pulled a bundle of manuscripts out of his pocket and began to speak without any introductory remarks. A more prosaic start to a lecture which aimed at revealing some of the deepest secrets of human existence could hardly be imagined.

I had some difficulty in understanding the first few sentences. The lecturer spoke English; but it was an English with soft melting vowels and with distinct and brisk consonants, the diction consisting of a mixture of soft cadences and sudden abrupt stops. It sounded as though he were really speaking Russian, though using English words. Once I became accustomed to his Russian accent, I recognized that he had a fair command of English. When on the other hand he could not find the right word he simply said: 'or something else' or 'or anything you want' or 'how to say', and left it at that, without any sign of self-consciousness or embarrassment. You had to take it or leave it. This was impressive.

Though Ouspensky hardly ever took his eyes off the manuscript in front of him, he did not read it. It seemed to serve as a focus for his eyes, and he referred to it only occasionally, and when he did so a long pause ensued. Ouspensky would take off his spectacles, and hold the manuscript close to his eyes. He would then read a sentence or two. This would be done not without an expression of strain on his face, as though he were reading something he had never seen before. There were none of the usual mannerisms which one so often meets with in professional lecturers. Ouspensky's movements were brisk but not hasty; the pauses and sudden halts seemed either

the result of a natural reserve or merely lack of forensic gifts. There was nothing affected about them.

Though the speaker's manner of speech, with its clipped sentences and words left in the air, was at times bewildering, the lecture itself was extremely clear. The speaker's approach to his subject was very direct; the basis of his arguments painstakingly scientific, and altogether one felt that a searching mind of great independence was here at work.

VI

One of the speaker's first sentences was: 'None of you here is awake. What you all do is—sleep.' After he had made this remark he stopped abruptly, as though withdrawing from the world of words into his own more comfortable universe. His appearance suddenly suggested to me some modern version of Buddha. The audience waited for almost a minute. The lecturer then went on: 'The difference between your present state of consciousness and your consciousness at night while you sleep is very small. It is not a fundamental difference; merely a difference of degree.' After saying this, Buddha withdrew into his own world again. Ten seconds passed. Then he continued: 'I cannot give you definitions of the subjects I shall talk to you about, because the meanings you attach to most words are wrong. Anyhow, as I give the words a different meaning, we should not understand each other. Therefore I can only try to develop my ideas to you, and you'll have to make an effort to grasp the meaning I attach to certain words as we go on.'

After this preface, Ouspensky tried to explain that he himself considered that modern psychology had taken over practically the whole range of interests that formerly belonged to philosophy, and that for him psychology was merely the knowledge of man not as a finite being but as something unfinished and constantly changing. It was not hard to see that his psychological system would have very little in common with any other system.

'I personally consider', the lecturer continued, 'that subconsciousness or unconsciousness, of which modern psychologists speak so much, does not exist at all. There can only exist many different levels of consciousness, and in all of them the element of time plays an important part. Man can be selfconscious—conscious of himself—only for a fraction of a second. He thinks he can be conscious, but he never is. There are four states of consciousness: sleeping, waking, self-consciousness and objective consciousness. In objective consciousness man can know truth; in self-consciousness he can know

truth about himself only; in waking he can know relative truth, and in sleep—no truth at all.'

The lecturer stopped for a minute or so as though wanting his audience to think it all over. 'The highest consciousness, which is objective consciousness,' he went on, 'can only be obtained after we have become self-conscious. But what happens between these two states we do not know. The intermediate state is full of mystery. We acquire objective consciousness only in mystical or occult experiences and through certain inner illuminations.' Ouspensky pulled out his watch and said: 'We can intensify our present state of what I call "the sleeping state of consciousness" for no more than two minutes at most. Look at the hand of your watch; try to think at the same time of yourself watching the hand of the watch, which means try to be conscious of yourself and your actions at the same time. You cannot do it in an unbroken spell of time for more than two minutes; and even when you do it, you are not self-conscious yet. Your whole life is a state of automatic, mechanical actions, performed in a state of sleep.' He stopped again and smiled apologetically. I had noticed that smile several times before: it seemed to be an apology for the statement he had made or was going to make or perhaps for the inferiority of the listeners, implied in the statement. The smile disappeared with the same suddenness with which it had lit up the face a moment earlier, and Ouspensky sank back into his Buddha-like state, in which he remained for a minute or two.

Then he went on: 'Your "I" does not exist. What you really have is a thousand different "I's", but not one of them is your real "I".' He then went on to explain that man has got five minds, not just one, and that he is composed of five different functions which are controlled by their respective minds. The five functions are: the intellectual, the emotional, the moving, the instinctive and the sex functions. The sex functions can be studied only after all the other functions are known; for they are the last ones to appear in man's life and they always depend on the other functions. The five functions should be working with either entire independence or in close collaboration, but generally they work in a muddled way and without the necessary control of their respective minds. Only through right self-observation given by the right psychological system can we locate, coordinate or detach them.

The lecture lasted exactly forty-five minutes. At its very end the speaker turned to the audience—slowly lifting his eyes from the table in front of him—and asked them to put questions to him. 'The subject is very vast,' he said; 'I have only been able to suggest each

point. Each one of them requires many explanations and answers.' Nobody uttered a word.

The silence was growing denser and denser, and eventually it became like a threatening cloud. It was not the usual nervousness that withholds inexperienced people from speaking in the presence of strangers, and I suspected that no one dared to formulate a question in front of such a logical and matter-of-fact lecturer. Most members of the audience were looking at the floor. This almost unbearable state lasted for about five minutes, though they seemed like as many hours. The very silence must have robbed the listeners of their courage. Suddenly the man at the table said: 'Ask me about anything that was not clear.'

The ice had been broken at last. Now a voice sounded through the room. Someone wanted to know whether the act of artistic creation puts the creator on a higher level of consciousness. 'Not in the least,' came the answer from the table; 'as a composer, poet or painter you are not different from any other man. Your work is as mechanical as the shoemaker's or that of a bricklayer. It is not you who does your work, but "it" does it. You are just the machine who follows the commands of the "it". You are a machine fitted out with certain wheels and screws and gadgets which shoemaker and bricklayer don't happen to possess. But don't imagine that being an artist makes you conscious. You compose your sonatas in the same state in which the bricklayer performs his functions.' Ouspensky finished his sentence, fell back into the chair and looked into the air. There was something irritating and at the same time impressive in those sudden impersonal endings to his answers.

A few more questions were asked; they were the questions of an educated and well-prepared audience. An hour after the questions had begun, Ouspensky said: 'You'll be informed in due time when there is to be another lecture.' He got up and walked out without looking at anyone or talking to any of the listeners. The audience rose and dispersed.

I waited for a while and then I asked the lady who had taken down my name at the entrance when there would be another lecture. She smiled charmingly and said in her melodious Russian accent: 'We never can tell. There can be a lecture next Monday, or Monday after that. I will ring you up when there is to be another lecture.' I gave her my telephone number and departed.

Not for a long time had I felt so intellectually stimulated as I did on my way home through the unstimulating surroundings of High Street, Kensington. I had little doubt that I had been in touch with a system of a distinctly esoteric significance.

VII

I must warn the reader that this account of Ouspensky is anything but complete and that much more could be said about him. More important than any portrait of Ouspensky the man is a picture of his teaching or rather of the teaching which he represents—for there was little doubt in my mind that Ouspensky represented one of those systems of hidden knowledge that hardly ever exist in print and are only transmitted by word of mouth. It discloses itself only through constant work, through personal discoveries step by step. It can only be absorbed through a long process of questions and answers, through a constant collaboration between the lecturer and his listeners.

I spoke to Ouspensky on many occasions; I spoke to his listeners; I visited the classes in which he delivered his lectures; I compared his ideas with those of other teachers; I tried to translate them into my very actions and to adapt my life to them. In spite of all this, my picture of Ouspensky can only be partial.

Ouspensky had been popular for a number of years in certain intellectual circles of London and Paris. Since most of his listeners were not driven by curiosity or fashion but were trying to follow his ideas year by year, there could be no doubt that he had transformed the conceptions of a number of thinking people.

The lady through whose kindness I had been admitted to Ouspensky's lectures was an old friend of his, and I begged her to arrange for me to meet him. She did not seem particularly pleased, and said that he might not want to receive me. 'He is rather elusive,' she remarked; 'and he does not care to meet people unless he knows that either he or his guest may derive some benefit from the meeting. He is sometimes even shy about too many people attending his classes.' Nevertheless she asked Ouspensky to receive me, and it was arranged that I should visit him at a house in Kent.

VIII

I expected to find what I imagined would be a typically Russian 'atmosphere'. I visualized innumerable glasses of tea with lemon, cigarettes, and the general air of untidiness worthy of an English drama about Russian émigrés. The place which I reached after an hour's railway journey was entirely different. It was an attractive house in a large garden, and the modern drawing-room was furnished in an unobtrusive manner. The house belonged to some friends of Ouspensky.

When Ouspensky entered, I noticed the same reserve that I had discerned during his lectures, and I did not realize until later on

that this reserve was the outcome of an inner command not to talk and, in fact, not to do more than was essential. It was a self-discipline not to indulge in all those superfluous little activities that, being neither necessary nor sincere, compel us to substitute them for non-existent thoughts and feelings. Whatever Ouspensky had to say was said in the shortest possible way, and was followed by silence. Those sudden endings that irritated me during his lectures were nothing but the logical end of a sentence in which everything had been said. Of course, it was difficult at first to carry on a conversation with a man who made no concessions to our habitual shortcomings or to social conventions. After a while I got used to it, and even began to feel the salutary effect of such a self-discipline.

In spite of Ouspensky's ascetic form of conversation I learned the main outline of his life. He was born in Moscow in 1878. His grandfather was a painter of religious pictures; both his parents were very cultured people. The father was an officer in the army, but his main hobbies were the arts and mathematics, especially the study of the fourth dimension. Thanks to an uncanny memory, Ouspensky still remembered himself at the age of two. Certain characteristics in him were determined at the age of six through reading two of the classics of Russian literature: Lermontoff's *Hero of Our Time* and Turgenyeff's *A Sportsman's Sketches*. Soon afterwards he began to develop a strong taste for poetry and painting which he considered the highest forms of art. At twelve he developed an interest in natural science. New discoveries and new interests seemed to come to him earlier than they do to most boys—a characteristic which he had in common with Steiner. When at the age of thirteen Ouspensky became interested in dreams, he turned immediately to the study of psychology; at sixteen he discovered for himself Nietzsche; at eighteen he began to travel and to write; and before he was twenty he had undertaken a serious study of science, soon coming, through his preoccupation with the natural sciences, to believe in the existence of hidden knowledge:

O.: 'I am only interested in a scientific approach to the problems surrounding us. Mysticism, occultism and the other supernatural movements interest me little. But I have felt that there must exist some deeper knowledge of our world than the one we are taught at our universities. I studied science after science; biology, mathematics and psychology, and I gathered as much of existing scientific knowledge as I could. I studied at a number of universities both in Russia and abroad, but after having acquainted myself with each science in turn I realized that I was always brought against a blank wall, and that I could go no further. This limitation in the exact

sciences filled me eventually with a deep mistrust of all academic knowledge. Though I had absorbed a great deal of that knowledge, I could value it only up to a point. In fact I hated official academic science to such an extent that I made up my mind never to pass an examination or to take a degree.'

R. L.: 'But your books show that most of your investigations are based on a wide scientific knowledge. I was assured by friends who are scientists themselves that some of your mathematical and neo-physical discoveries are of paramount importance.'

O.: 'But they were not the outcome of the knowledge gained at universities. That knowledge formed only a part of the necessary material, but it did not bring me nearer truth. It always remained within its own special circle. True knowledge should never be limited to itself but should allow you to establish a connection with other branches of knowledge. Though I was sceptical of scientific knowledge of the academic kind, I thought at the same time that there could be no new science in the world, and that everything must have been fixed somewhere, some time.'

R. L.: 'What exactly gave you the impulse to search for truth in those regions of human thought that are shunned by official science?'

O.: 'In a way it was theosophy. In 1907 I came across theosophy, or rather the earlier theosophical books which were prohibited in Russia. The theosophists had not begun yet to repeat themselves, and they were still in contact with hidden truth. I am referring to books written before the beginning of this century.'

R. L.: 'Did you meet the theosophical leaders?'

O.: 'Yes, I went to Adyar in India, to the headquarters of the Theosophical Society, and spent some six weeks there, in contact with Annie Besant and several other leaders. Most theosophical books since then are nothing but a rehash of truths established by Mme Blavatsky, Col. Olcott and the early writings of Annie Besant and Leadbeater. Later on I found out for myself that most esoteric knowledge is transmitted from century to century by word of mouth. I went to the Near East, I studied occult literature, I made all kinds of psychological experiments. I published several books, I lectured. In 1913 I went to Egypt, Ceylon and India, and did not return till after the beginning of the war, though I soon realized that to find what I was seeking I should have had to stay in the East much longer. Eventually in 1915 and, so to speak, under my very nose, I met a system which contained more essential knowledge than any I had yet encountered. Everything that I had been hunting for in the East, in occult literature, in secret doctrines, was in that system which I

found in Moscow among a small group of people, instructed by a certain Gurdjieff.'

R. L.: 'Do you mean the enigmatic Gurdjieff from Fontainebleau, whose name I constantly come across without however being able to locate or indeed to verify him?'

O.: 'I don't think there can be two Gurdjieffs. Many important truths, unknown to any other system, were explained through the system propagated by Gurdjieff—for of course it was not Gurdjieff's own discovery but an esoteric system which had been entrusted to him by others. Gurdjieff lectured in Moscow, and, though I was living at the time in Petersburg, I soon decided to join him. When the Russian revolution came, I had no illusions about it, but decided at once to leave the country and to await the end of the war in some neutral place with the intention, when the war was over, of continuing my work in England.'

R. L.: 'Had you lived in England before?'

O.: 'No, but on my way back from India I had stayed in England while making preparations for the publication of some of my books. My connections with Gurdjieff made it impossible for me to leave Russia in 1917. He went to the Caucasus, and after a time several members of his classes, myself amongst them, joined him there, where we stayed for over two years. During 1918, however, I had begun to feel somehow out of touch with Gurdjieff. It seemed to me as though he were changing, but whatever the cause I could no longer understand him, and it appeared to me that he had drifted away from his original idea. Although I tried to concentrate on separating the system from his personality, and by keeping the two apart to go on working with Gurdjieff, it proved impossible, and eventually I had to leave him. He went to Tiflis, and I remained where I was, at Essentuki. I was liberated from the Bolsheviks by the Whites in 1919, and soon afterwards I left for Constantinople.'

R. L.: 'Did you ever come across Gurdjieff again?'

O.: 'Yes, during my lectures in Constantinople. I even tried to resume our work in common, but it was impossible. In 1921 I went to England and began to lecture there to people who were interested in such ideas as those with which I was concerned; and when Gurdjieff visited London I tried to help him—I even kept in close touch with him and with his work when he moved to France, and visited him there on many occasions. Early in 1924, however, I realized finally that we could not work together, and so I broke away from him entirely, and I haven't seen him since.'

R. L.: 'Do you think there still exist definite groups possessing esoteric knowledge?'

O.: 'There are several such esoteric groups in the East and a few even in the West. They are the only ones that can transmit higher understanding. You find higher knowledge of paramount importance in Christianity, though perhaps not in orthodox Church Christianity. You find esoteric knowledge in the Gospels, but hardly anyone knows how to read them. Does anyone know the real meaning of the Lord's Prayer? I doubt it. But the Lord's Prayer contains some of the deepest esoteric knowledge.'

R. L.: 'Do you believe in God?'

O.: 'I don't believe in anything. I believe only in the possibility of acquiring more and higher knowledge. I take nothing for granted—neither God nor destiny nor faith. What we usually call faith is nothing but a bundle of automatic emotional reactions, yet I know that besides such imaginary faith there is also *real* faith.'

R. L.: 'Do you believe in the existence of an individual "I" in each one of us?'

O.: 'I should myself have put that question rather differently. All I can say is that our "I" is for us practically non-existent at present, because we don't know it. Something we don't know of cannot exist for us—and so this becomes a useless question. We are thousands of "I's", all of which are imaginary. Our real "I" we can only discover through persistent effort.'

R. L.: 'Knowledge, I presume, is for you both the apex and the axis of all human existence?'

O.: 'Of course. The more we know about ourselves, the more we discover about other things. Things vary in accordance with our knowledge. They are just as much or as little as we know about them. They are neither material nor spiritual nor anything else. They are just what we know about them, their reality being merely the expression of our own understanding.'

R. L.: 'What is your attitude towards miracles?'

O.: 'They cannot happen unconsciously. Even the Transfiguration is not a magical but a mechanical happening. We can achieve miracles only with full consciousness.'

R. L.: 'What of magical language, of Eastern mantras, of invocations of Western religions, magical formulae, of mediaeval brotherhoods such as that of the Rosicrucians?'

O.: 'There is magical language: but only for people who know how to read it. Language, no matter how magical it may be, can have no influence over people who do not know. What we generally believe to be the magical power of language is simply its appeal to the emotions.'

R. L.: 'So you don't believe in any mechanical transmission of knowledge—through magic formulae, for instance?'

O.: 'I don't. Only conscious effort can achieve anything. Nothing can grow through the mechanical work of copying.'

R. L.: 'You don't believe in any mental exercises either, I take it?'

O.: 'All Jesuitical, Rosicrucian and similar exercises are useless for us. Exercises fix our present state of sleep so strongly that it will be only more difficult to overcome it. They can be compared to fixing a photograph before it has been developed. What is the good of fixing yourself before you have been developed? Fixation may be all right after you have developed certain qualities—not before.'

IX

During the following months I was regularly admitted to Ouspensky's lectures. His audience was not the sentimental, essentially self-centred and lazy crowd which was ready enough to support so many spiritual movements at that time; there was none of the happy-go-lucky optimism of cheapened religiosity, or of the blind devotion with which we meet in the case of so many teachers and their disciples. Ouspensky's very method forced his listeners to think for themselves. At times it was almost painful to watch how they seemed to concentrate on each of his pronouncements, and how hard they were trying to think out certain problems for themselves.

Generally, Ouspensky would lecture for five or ten minutes, and then he would stop and say: 'Think about what I have just said, and ask me questions about it. We must discuss it before I can go on.' Such a method compelled active collaboration on the part of his pupils. At the beginning there was always something rather frightening in the breathless pause before the first question was asked. Fear that a question might be irrelevant to what had been said during the lecture, or that it might disclose intellectual curiosity alone, prevailed even towards the end of a session. Mere literary or philosophical questions were not welcome, and the effect of such a question was invariably devastating. Ouspensky was never rude, nor even ironical—but he was cruelly matter-of-fact, and would not tolerate questions that did not betray an honest desire to know more.

Someone would ask, after Ouspensky had discussed the various states of consciousness: 'Is Buddha the seventh state of consciousness?'

Ouspensky, without even looking up to see who had asked the unfortunate question, would only answer: 'I don't know.' He

then remained silent, and you felt that in his thoughts he probably continued, 'and I don't care'. There was nothing to be done, and the person who had put the question had to consider the answer satisfactory and could only try to hide the sudden blush that was covering her face—for women were the chief offenders.

After Ouspensky had explained that a genius is not a being with a higher consciousness, but just a more perfect piece of machinery than ordinary people, someone asked: 'Don't you think that a man like Beethoven was more than a piece of machinery?'

Ouspensky answered to this: 'I don't; and I am not interested in it, because I am only interested in my own or perhaps your state—that's why we are here.'

He forced his listeners to train their thoughts to keep to what was real, what was directly connected with the teaching that was given them. If someone tried to introduce a word that had a meaning in another psychological system, but was not used by Ouspensky he would not admit any compromise. Once a listener asked: 'Should we meditate?'

Ouspensky answered: 'I don't understand.'

'Should we not meditate?' repeated a more faltering voice.

'Meditation is a word that you picked up somewhere,' came the answer; 'you should know by now that it has no meaning whatever in the system that I am representing. So please try to refrain from using unnecessary words. We have got our own terminology, which is quite adequate to our purpose. If I should find that we need new words, I will introduce them myself.' All this was said without the slightest sign of impatience, very calmly and without any suggestion of a reprimand.

No matter what the ultimate effects of Ouspensky's system, his very sternness was of the greatest value. People who found it hard to think were forced to keep their thoughts within a definite circle, concentrating on the knowledge contained within that particular circle so as to absorb it in such a way as to create their own thoughts out of that circle.

Ouspensky offers little to the imagination; but very much to one's power of thought; and there are no miracles, dramatic conversions, emotional confessions or *tours de force* in his method. He was never satisfied with one particular discovery, but tried to go deeper and deeper. He took nothing for granted and induced his listeners to establish every new fact for themselves. There was no evasiveness in his teaching or in his answers, and he was almost unattractively sober in his pronouncements.

The whole of Ouspensky's system rests on the acknowledgement of the truth that man is not conscious but asleep. Most of us do not even know that we are asleep. We can only begin to wake up if we realize and admit that we function in a dream, automatically. We can only wake up through self-observation. Self-observation can only be produced through constant effort. One of the main barriers preventing us from waking up is our imagination,[1] which intrudes constantly into our thought. Imagination runs away with our thoughts and leads a thoroughly destructive existence within us. We are only rarely able to think beyond a certain point, and this point is generally very soon reached. Our thoughts are then taken over by our imagination, which runs amuck with them, without direction, aim or control. We can only stop the wasteful chase of our imagination by being attentive. The moment we are attentive the activities of our imagination stop, and thought can come into action. Imagination is a very violent destructor of energy; mental effort on the other hand stores up energy. We waste a lot of energy by the wrong use of our various centres. We allow our five centres to become mixed up, and one to do the work of another.

Good or bad can only exist if there is an aim. Without aim, they are non-existent, and we merely accept conventional versions of them, created in the past by people who were as much asleep as ourselves. Reality can only be known in a state of waking. Real knowledge is creative knowledge. Without instruction, coming from people in possession of such a knowledge, progress is almost impossible.

Our ultimate goal is an objective consciousness in which all our former inner limitations cease to exist. In such a consciousness there are no secrets or mysteries. But we can never reach such a high level through increase of our knowledge alone. Knowledge and being must be perfected together. We must aim at growing into a harmonious whole in which bodily, emotional and mental functions are alike developed; where they perform all their individual duties; where they can collaborate at will; where, in short, both the man and his understanding function to perfection.

XI

Though from the ordinary man's point of view the psychological part was perhaps the most important, it formed only a fraction of

[1] The word 'imagination' in Ouspensky's terminology does not express creative imagination responsible for most scientific, literary, artistic or, in fact, any creative work. Such an imagination he calls by different names, according to the particular case. He means, by imagination, uncontrolled imaginary ponderings or daydreams, automatic and without effort.

Ouspensky's system, which embraced an entire cosmology, and necessarily dealt with such different subjects as mathematics, physics, sex, religion, the arts. But those branches required an even more direct study under him than the psychological part of his method.

As in most esoteric doctrines, the school idea plays a predominant part in Ouspensky's system. Certain things cannot, according to him, be taught or learned from books or through individual study but require a school—a group of people who will work together under special guidance, evolving the same terminology, beginning to understand one another. Since time immemorial, from the ancient mysteries to the various mediaeval schools or monastic brotherhoods, the school method has always been considered as indispensable for the propagation of hidden knowledge. No man working by himself can obtain certain results, since these can evolve only through discussions between teacher and pupils. The truths contained in an esoteric doctrine cannot be realized so long as there is no school.

Never before had I met anyone working more directly and more logically to help people to conquer the phantoms of sleep and to lead them into consciousness.

CHAPTER IX

Harmonious Development of Man: Gurdjieff

THE personality and life of Gurdjieff are both shrouded in mystery. Even Gurdjieff's main collaborators were unable to testify as to the truth of some of the facts. They derived most of their knowledge from Gurdjieff's mother and brother, whose reports had to bridge the gaps between Gurdjieff's own haphazard utterances. His Greek nationality is questioned by some people: one of his pupils told me that his master was an Armenian, while the majority of his pupils used formerly to call him, in the Russian fashion, by the patronymic George Ivanovitch. He is supposed to have been born in Alexandropol in the late 'seventies; but certain facts seemed to point to his having been born earlier. His father appears to have been a merchant; he himself had a rather superficial elementary education, and his knowledge was acquired almost entirely in later years. At one period

in his life he was a carpet dealer, and for a number of years he travelled extensively in the Near East and in central Asia. He was reluctant to talk about those early adventures, and we can only guess at most of them.[1]

A few years before World War One, Gurdjieff suddenly appeared in Moscow. His lectures attracted considerable interest in certain intellectual circles. The background of these essays in education was clarified by some autobiographical material which he introduced into a later publication. It appears that he had been in contact with a number of people who devoted their time to the study of what Gurdjieff called 'theosophism', 'occultism', or 'spiritualism', and had eventually become an expert among them. After some years he abandoned these 'workshops', as he called them, 'for the perfection of psychopathism', and, 'with enormous and almost superhuman effort and heavy expenditure', organized in 'different cities three small groups of people of varying types'. He founded his groups in Russia, 'which at that time was peaceful, rich and quiet'. 'Arriving at this final decision', he began at once 'to liquidate current affairs, which were dispersed over different countries in Asia', and to collect together all the wealth which he had amassed.

The Russian Revolution brought an end to his groups. He left Moscow for Tiflis, whence he proceeded later to Constantinople. A certain number of his pupils followed him, and in 1920 he suddenly appeared in Berlin, which was at the time most promising ground for any unusual movement. A year or so later Gurdjieff moved on to Paris, and once or twice he visited London. His teaching, his strange power over a number of people, and the help of various friends enabled him to collect enough money to acquire the Château du Prieuré, a fourteenth-century property at Fontainebleau, and establish a new school there.

The name of the new school was 'Institute for Man's Harmonious Development', and most of Gurdjieff's pupils at that time were Russian or English. The strong emotional appeal of his romantic personality attracted the Russians; while for his Anglo-Saxon followers it was the Rabelaisian exuberance of his whole personality and the mystery attached to him that provided much of the outward fascination.

The pupils generally came to live at the Château, and for the first week or two they would be treated as guests. Afterwards they had

[1] Most of the facts pertaining to Gurdjieff's birth, origins and early life have emerged from his posthumous book, *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, published in 1963 (E. P. Dutton & Co., New York). He was born in 1877 in Alexandropol in Russia, near the Persian frontier, and, after protracted journeys through Central Asia and the Middle East, re-appeared in Russia in 1913.

to share all the chores, which included, besides ordinary housework, such manual labours as gardening, felling trees, or chopping wood. Gurdjieff held very strong views on the necessity of an unconventional way of living, and of activities likely to decrease old habits and the automatic mechanical functions of his pupils. While performing such work as gardening, or chopping wood, his pupils were obliged to employ those of the muscular functions that had not yet been deadened by conventional use. Manual work revealed to them also a number of hitherto unknown truths about themselves.

Though most of the pupils believed in Gurdjieff with the fervour of true discipleship, there were often quarrels and violent arguments, and these disturbances ran like a dark thread through the whole history of the Prieuré. Some of the pupils would at times complain that they could no longer endure Gurdjieff's violent temper, his apparent greed for money or the extravagance of his private life. On occasions these feelings so outweighed their admiration for him that they felt constrained to leave the Château indignantly. I have been assured that the quarrels were not due to a lack of self-control, but formed part of Gurdjieff's tactics. By rousing their anger he induced people to forget their self-discipline and thus reveal to him their real emotions. Possibly this was not the only reason for Gurdjieff's displays of temper; when he considered that a pupil was failing to make sufficient progress under his guidance, instead of asking him to leave, Gurdjieff preferred to provoke such storms as would force him to depart.

II

Upon being requested to explain what he was aiming at, Gurdjieff would answer: 'At developing people into human beings'. To achieve this, Gurdjieff used the picturesque expressions of a most unconventional French or an even less conventional English, a deliberately engaging intonation, and a veritable galaxy of gestures.

When asked what he meant by developing people into human beings, Gurdjieff would generally add that he wanted them to become more conscious of reality. Though Gurdjieff, unlike Ouspensky, generally followed a system of evasiveness, he gives us in his book some glimpses of his leading ideas. There he says that 'the modern man does not think, but something thinks for him; he does not act, but something acts through him; he does not achieve, but something is achieved through him.' This is, of course, the belief of most teachers.

Gurdjieff's first rule for facing reality demanded that we should break away from the automatic manner of living common to people in general. According to Gurdjieff, our physical centre is fully

developed, the growth of the emotional centre has only just reached the stage of adolescence, while the mental centre has not developed beyond the stage of infancy. We ought to be able to control each one of the three by any of the other two centres. Gurdjieff considers that most of the characteristics commonly regarded as virtues are in truth vices. In his opinion man's fundamental sins are vanity and self-conceit, both being the result of a wrong education. 'I categorically affirm,' he says, 'that the happiness and self-consciousness, which should be in real man . . . depend in most cases exclusively on the absence in us of the feeling of "vanity".' There are two guiding principles for the attainment of that happiness: (1) 'To be patient towards every living creature', and (2) 'not to attempt by the use of any power of influence we possess to alter the consequences of the evil deeds of our neighbours'.

One of Gurdjieff's main methods is a queer system of dances, the aim of which is not to give the dancer a chance to express his subjective emotions, but to teach him the collaboration of his three different centres through 'objective' exercises. Every movement, pace and rhythm is minutely prescribed. Each limb has to be trained in a way that permits it to make independent movements, not at all co-ordinated with those of the other limbs. Gurdjieff's dances were meant to break the performers' muscular habits. By creating independent movements instead, he endeavoured to attack their mental and emotional conventions.

Gurdjieff himself wrote the scenario and the music of the dances. Some of the music was based on dervish dances, of which he seemed to possess a very thorough knowledge. He has written thousands of compositions, most of which served as music for the dances.

When, in 1924, Gurdjieff took a group of his pupils to the United States, the performances of 'objective dances' roused a certain interest. Many people were attracted by their novelty, for these dances had nothing in common with the methods of Dalcroze, Rudolf Steiner, Isadora Duncan, or any of the newer reformers.

The British author, Llewelyn Powys, described the visit of Gurdjieff to New York and the effect of his dances in a book, *The Verdict of Bridlegoose* (1927), in which he writes: 'The famous prophet and magician Gurdjieff appeared in New York accompanied by Mr Orage, who was acting for him as a kind of Saint Paul. . . . I had an opportunity of observing Gurdjieff while he stood smoking not far from me in the vestibule. . . . His general appearance made one think of a riding master, though there was something about his presence that affected one's nerves in a strange way. Especially

did one feel this when his pupils came on to the stage, to perform like a hutchful of hypnotized rabbits under the gaze of a master conjurer.'

I heard similar opinions from many different sources. People told me that the dancers looked like frightened mice; but they added that it was useless to judge the dances themselves by common aesthetic standards. And yet I came across people who had admired them even for their aesthetic beauty, though there were none of the usual attractions of stage presentation. The dancers wore simple tunics and trousers. One of them told me that the impression of being hypnotized came from the intense concentration that each performance required. Not only had their bodies to act: each one of their three centres had to be controlled consciously, and the required co-ordination of the three centres could only be achieved by intense concentration.

Soon after his return from America, Gurdjieff had a serious motor accident at Fontainebleau, and remained an invalid for many months. 'On account of my motor accident . . . which brought me near to death,' Gurdjieff says, 'I was forced to liquidate everything . . . that had been created by me with such unimagined efforts.' Regular work at the Institute had to be given up. Though occasionally pupils would still come to stay at the Château, Gurdjieff's main educational activities at Prieuré belonged to the past. But his teaching was spreading through America, where his main collaborator, Alfred Orage, was holding special classes. Gurdjieff began to visit America regularly almost every year, and after 1930 he made New York his headquarters.

III

It was Gurdjieff's personality rather than his doctrine that so strongly affected many people in France, England and America. One of his pupils said to me: 'I imagine that Rasputin must have been like Gurdjieff; mysterious, domineering, attractive and frightening at the same time; full of an over-abundant vitality and of strange knowledge, inaccessible to other men.' Some people tried to dismiss Gurdjieff as a charlatan and hyponotist. His hypnotic powers were never disputed, yet all his external methods constituted but an insignificant part of his far wider knowledge. It was not merely emotional women and certain types of semi-intellectual men who came under the spell of Gurdjieff. Men and women with pronounced critical faculties and a marked intelligence became his pupils, and they all admitted that Gurdjieff was one of the real spiritual experiences in their lives. Katherine Mansfield was one of his followers,

and she believed deeply in Gurdjieff, and even hoped that, under his influence, she might be able to conquer the disease from which she was suffering. She actually went to work under Gurdjieff's directions at Fontainebleau, though too late to regain her health, for she died there after a few months.

A great number of men and women well known in the intellectual world came under the spell, and D. H. Lawrence apparently gave much thought to Gurdjieff, and was at one time on the point of entering his circle. Lawrence heard much about him from his American friend, Mrs Mabel Dodge. He was extremely interested in Gurdjieff's ideas, and referred to him in many of his letters. But Mrs Dodge's enthusiasm seems to have aroused his suspicions, and he wrote to her in April 1926: 'My I, my fourth centre, will look after me better than I could ever look after it. Which is all I feel about Gurdjieff. . . .' A month later he wrote from Florence: 'As for Gurdjieff and Orage and the awakening of various centres and the ultimate I and all that—to tell you the truth, plainly, I don't know . . . there is no way mapped out, and never will be. . . .' Eventually, when his friend pressed him to go and visit Gurdjieff, Lawrence became impatient, and wrote: 'I don't think that I want to go and see Gurdjieff. You can't imagine how little interest I have in those modes of salvation. . . . I don't like the Gurdjieffs and the Orages and the other little thunderstorms.'

A. R. Orage, whom Lawrence mentioned in the last letter was Gurdjieff's chief assistant and lecturer. He had great intelligence and an attractive personality, and it was mainly due to him that Gurdjieff's ideas became popular in America. A philosopher and writer, before the war he owned the review *New Age*, and was the author of various highly acclaimed philosophical and critical books.

IV

I had for long been anxious to meet Gurdjieff, and, when I was planning a visit to New York, I asked Orage to give me an introduction, but at the time, the two men were barely on speaking terms. Eventually, however, I was given a letter of introduction to an old friend of Gurdjieff's in New York, who advised me to get into touch with Gurdjieff's secretary.

I rang up the secretary, who advised me to write a letter, giving all the reasons for my proposed visit and stating in detail who I was. Two days later the secretary rang me up: Mr Gurdjieff would see me at 2.30 p.m. in his rooms, numbers 217 and 218 at his hotel.

Before my interview I had lunch with an American author who was supposed to have known Gurdjieff for many years, and I asked

him about Gurdjieff. 'I have never actually spoken to him,' he said; 'but I often went to his classes and to his dances. I must confess that he is an enigma to me.'

'Do you think it is true that he sometimes uses his strange faculties for other than spiritual purposes?'

'It would be unfair to affirm this. All the unorthodox things we hear about him may be parts of a system of deep spiritual significance. You must not forget that Mme Blavatsky, too, often tried to obtain genuine reactions from her pupils by shocking and antagonizing them. Gurdjieff may perhaps be doing something of the sort. There was a time when Orage and others of Gurdjieff's followers tried to induce me to join them and to become one of Gurdjieff's assistants. I refused persistently for a number of years, and I must say I am glad that I was never intimately associated with them.'

'Is it true that Gurdjieff has changed thoroughly since his motor accident?'

'He certainly seems to have done so. He was almost dead for a very long time, and it may be that such a deep experience has transformed him. As you may have heard, his first book came out quite recently. It surprised me, for it showed me a new, more altruistic Gurdjieff.'

'Where can one get this book?'

'I fear nowhere. It has been printed privately, and Gurdjieff sends it only to those he considers worthy of being instructed by him. He happened to send me a copy, but its style is so atrocious that I had the greatest difficulty in getting through it.'

'Have you seen him recently?'

'Yes, at a reception last spring. I must tell you of an interesting incident which occurred that day. A friend of mine, who is one of our great novelists, was sitting at my table. I pointed to a table at which Gurdjieff was sitting, and asked her whether she knew him. "No, who is he?" she replied looking across. Gurdjieff caught her eye, and we saw distinctly that he suddenly began to inhale and to exhale in a particular way. I am too old a hand at such tricks not to have known that Gurdjieff was employing one of the methods he must have learned in the East. A few moments later I noticed that my friend was turning pale; she seemed to be on the verge of fainting. And yet she is anything but highly strung. I was very much surprised to see her in that strange condition, but she recovered after a few moments. I asked her what the matter was. "That man is uncanny", she whispered. "Something awful happened", she continued, but began after a moment to laugh. "I ought to be ashamed, nevertheless I'll tell you what happened. I looked at your 'friend' a moment ago, and he caught my eye. He looked at me in such a peculiar way that

within a second or so I suddenly felt as though I had been struck right through my sexual centre. It was beastly!" ' My host stopped for a second, and added smilingly: 'You had better be careful. The man you are going to see can certainly make use of strange powers: he had not learned them in Tibet for nothing.'

'I so often hear about his experiences in Tibet,' I replied; 'but I am somewhat suspicious of those Tibetan tales. Every other messiah, from Mme Blavatsky onwards, claims to have gathered knowledge in the mountains of Tibet. How do you know that Gurdjieff has actually ever been there?'

'I happen to possess first-hand proofs. Some years ago there was a luncheon in New York, given for Gurdjieff. A number of distinguished men had been invited, among others the writer, Achmed Abdullah, who told me that he had never seen Gurdjieff before, but that he was very much looking forward to meeting this unusual Armenian. When Gurdjieff entered the room Achmed Abdullah turned to me and whispered: "I have met that man before. Do you know who he really is? Before the war he was in Lhassa as an agent of the Russian Secret Service. I was in Lhassa at the same time, and in a way we worked against each other." Some people say he was in Lhassa as a Secret Service agent, in order to disguise the real purpose of his visit, which was to learn the supernatural methods of the Lamas. Other people maintain that his esoteric studies were only a pretext behind which he could hide his political activities. But who can tell?'

V

Gurdjieff lived in a small hotel in 57th Street. When the reception clerk announced my arrival I was told to go 'right up' to number 217. A tall young man with a cigarette in his mouth was standing at the door to receive me. 'How do you do', he said, 'he will be with you in a moment; please sit down.' He looked presentable, but I have hardly ever seen a pair of more frightened eyes. I had come to this meeting determined not to dramatize it, but to observe as keenly as possible. There could be no doubt about the expression on the young man's face. He was very pale, his eyes glowed feverishly, and he gave me the impression of someone who had just seen a ghost. He smoked his cigarette nervously, with his eyes focused all the time on the adjoining room. There was no door between the two rooms, and I could discern in the far one a bed and some luggage. The sitting-room in which we were waiting was, in comparison with those of most hotels of the district, shabbily furnished. Several cheap suitcases were lying on the floor in front of an empty fireplace. I heard

someone opening the door from the passage to the bedroom, and a moment later Gurdjieff joined us.

'How do you do,' he said in very bad English and with a strong oriental accent. I was particularly struck by the way he pronounced the 'h'. It was not the light English 'h', but the deep, guttural 'ch' of some German words, or rather the 'chr' of Semitic languages. Gurdjieff was wearing a waistcoat half unbuttoned, no coat, dark trousers and bedroom slippers.

'Excuse this costume,' he said; 'I have only just finished lunch.' He then pointed at me and said to the young man: 'This Englishman very precise.' He obviously meant punctual. 'He really English', he went on; 'not like you all, half-Turks, half-Turks.' He turned towards me: 'Americans are not English, for me they are only half English and half, half'—he was trying to remember the word—'half Turkish'. He laughed and continued instantly, 'You excuse my English. It awfully bad. I speaking my own English, you know—not modern, but pre-Shakespearian English. It awfully bad, but my friends understand. And I understand everything in real, modern English, so you go and speak. This man'—he pointed to his pupil—'will translate my pre-Shakespearian English for you. He knows.'

'Oh, it is perfectly clear to me, Mr Gurdjieff,' I tried to contradict; 'I understand everything you say.'

'Then have a cigarette.'

'Thanks, I am afraid I don't smoke.'

'Oh, not smoke one of those Americans! No, I give you wonderful cigarettes, real cigarettes, Turkish and Russian. Say what?' He placed a large box of Russian cigarettes in front of me.

'Thanks all the same,' I said: 'but I really do not smoke.'

'Come, come, they good, *prima, prima.* If not smoke these, I can give you . . . what calls itself non-smoking cigarettes. What call you?' he turned to the young man who explained: 'Mr Gurdjieff keeps special cigarettes for non-smokers, perhaps you would care to take one.'

I was beginning to feel slightly uncomfortable, but I tried to treat the whole matter as a joke, and I said light-heartedly: 'Thanks awfully, I am sure I should be sick if I smoked any of your cigarettes; and no one here would enjoy that. I have never smoked in my life', I lied.

I sat down on a little sofa not far from Gurdjieff, who was reclining comfortably in a big chair. The young man had remained all through our conversation on his chair near the fireplace. He kept on glancing nervously towards Gurdjieff, and it was impossible to imagine that he could ever laugh or smile. Terror seemed the only expression

of which his face was capable—or was it some hysterical form of expectation?

Gurdjieff's face was manifestly Levantine. The skin was darkish; the twisted moustache was black, though greying; the eyes were very black and vivid. But the most Levantine feature of his face was the mouth: it never remained quite shut and it exposed the teeth, one or two of which had been darkened as though by constant smoking. He was quite bald and slightly stout; yet you could see that he had been good-looking in his earlier days, and it was obvious that women must have been very susceptible to his Levantine virility.

He was very obliging and smiled constantly, as though trying to show me his most attractive side. Nevertheless I began to feel rather queer. I am not at all what is called a 'good medium'; no doctor or hypnotist has ever succeeded in hypnotizing me. On this particular occasion I was very much on my guard and prepared to counteract any possible psychic influence. And yet I was beginning to feel a distinct weakness in the lower parts of my body, from the navel downwards, and mainly in the legs. This feeling grew steadily, and after about twenty or thirty seconds it became so strong that I knew I should hardly be able to get up.

I had been specially careful not to look at Gurdjieff and not to allow him to look into my eyes. I had avoided his eyes for at least two minutes. I had turned all the time towards the young man, to whom I had said: 'I shall talk to you, and perhaps you will be so kind as to translate my words to Mr Gurdjieff in case he does not understand me.' The young man agreed, and I remained facing him, with Gurdjieff on my right. And yet the feeling of physical weakness pervaded me more and more.

I was intensely awake and conscious of what was going on within me, and I was observing this fascinating new experience with the keenest awareness. The feeling inside my stomach was one of acute nervousness, amounting almost to physical pain. This weakness did not upset me above the navel: it was limited to the stomach and legs. I knew that if I tried to get up, my legs would sag under me and I should fall to the floor.

Though I had not the slightest doubt that my queer state had been produced by Gurdjieff's influence, I was perfectly composed and determined to get out of it. I concentrated more and more on my conversation with the young man, and slowly the feeling inside seemed to melt away, and I began to feel normal again. After a couple of minutes I had definitely left Gurdjieff's 'magic circle'.

There are several explanations of my queer experience. It might have been a form of hypnosis or even auto-hypnosis which, for

certain reasons, could affect only the lower half of my body without touching the brain and the emotional centre. But I doubt if it was either. It may have been a form of electric emanation such as Rasputin is said to have possessed in a high degree.

According to clairvoyant people who have disciplined their gift to such an extent as to be able to use it with the fullest consciousness, a clairvoyant examination may produce effects similar to that which I had just experienced. Rudolf Steiner examined people occasionally in that way, the object of such an examination being to see the person's spiritual instead of his merely physical picture. But Steiner was always fully conscious of what such an examination entails. 'The thought that a human being could be merely an object of observation,' he said in one of his books, 'must never for a moment be entertained. Self-education must see to it that this insight into human nature goes hand in hand with an unlimited respect for the personal privilege of each individual and with the recognition of the sacred and inviolable nature of that which dwells in each human being.'

Of course I could have protected myself against a 'clairvoyant examination'. Had I come to meet Gurdjieff in an open instead of a defensive state of mind he would probably not have succeeded in achieving whatever he was aiming at. No 'psychic' power is strong enough to affect a loving attitude, and there are other methods by which it is possible to protect oneself against an unwanted clairvoyant scrutiny.

When the feeling of weakness in my legs had disappeared, I turned towards Gurdjieff. 'I was told', I said, 'that you had lately published a book. As to my knowledge you have never published anything before, everything I know about your ideas is secondhand. I should be grateful if you would tell me where I can buy your book.'

My host got up, went to one of the black suitcases on the floor, took out of it a thin book, and came up to me. 'Here it is, and, you know, no money can buy it. It is only for a few. But I present it to you. You find all in it you want.'

I thanked him and went on: 'I was told you were preparing a large book that will contain all your teaching and your experience of many years.'

He waved his hand as though the book I mentioned meant nothing to him. 'I writing nine books always, they thick so—so.' He showed with his fingers that each one of these books was at least three or four inches thick.

'There seems to be a manuscript of one of your books in the

possession of one of your former pupils in London. Is it one of the proposed nine volumes?'

Gurdjieff made a contemptuous gesture: 'That nothing, just nothing. They all have my visions.'

I looked enquiringly at the young man. 'He means versions', he whispered.

'I always write three visions. Only last is for publication. No one knows last one only myself. Others are here and there and here. They all have them, and then begin their own teaching on them. But that mean nothing. I have pupils all across the world, in all countries, groups are everywhere. In England alone fifteen, in fifteen cities. And all try to do new teaching on my teaching. Ach, but means nothing, just nothing.' He snapped his fingers in a gesture of contempt.

'Is it true that you are preparing a group of disciples who will eventually become a sort of esoteric school, out of which your knowledge will radiate into the world?'

'You find everything in this book, everything.' He pointed to the little volume in my hand. 'Everything is there. No good you now speak to me. You not know me. You first read this book and then come to me. Then we speak together. But now you not know what ask. First read this book, everything in it.'

I understood that Gurdjieff had no wish to answer my question and that he considered the conversation finished. But I was determined to stay on for another few minutes and to see more of him. 'Is Ouspensky's teaching in your opinion original or based on yours; and do you consider him the most important of all your former followers?' I continued as though I had not noticed his impatience.

'He just been one of my pupils, one of thousand, ten thousand.' He again made one of his deprecatory movements with one hand. Whenever he made one of these gestures he looked the perfect Levantine: evasive in his answers, hyperbolical and anxious as to what effect he was producing. It may be that all the inconsistencies of his behaviour were parts of a method and that by employing such a system of 'tricks' he was able to discern my 'reactions' more clearly than he would otherwise have done; nevertheless I could not make myself believe that the pursuit of truth need ever require such a bewildering method of approach. Why should a man with great knowledge and experience require a technique of rudeness, of antagonizing his pupils, of constant evasiveness? Did not his knowledge suffice to 'look' into me and to examine my 'natural reactions' on a basis of ordinary human relationship? And yet some serious-minded people had been under his spell. He had treated

some of them like slaves, and yet they had forsaken all their former beliefs and blindly followed him. His hypnotic powers and the physical attraction he must once have possessed could not alone have produced such effects. Ouspensky had undoubtedly been right when he had told me that one had to separate the system represented by Gurdjieff from Gurdjieff the man.

Now that I had seen Gurdjieff the man, I felt that, for once, the original had been true to the accounts of him.

I got up, and Gurdjieff said: 'You first read this book. It has everything, and then you come to me again. We then talk.'

'When and where can I see you again?' I enquired.

'My office, Childs.'

I looked up without understanding. The young man near the fireplace helped: 'He means the Restaurant Childs in Fifth Avenue and 56th Street.'

'I have three Childs, they all my office. Here I work in the morning. But evening my office Childs. You come and we then drink coffee together and speak more. I there every evening six to eight.'

'Thank you, Mr Gurdjieff. I shall certainly visit you there after I have read your book.'

I went straight to my hotel, and when I reached my room I felt a strong desire to wash my hands. I washed them in very hot water for about five minutes, and then felt better, and sat down to record my strange experience.

VI

The book that Gurdjieff had presented me with was bound in a most curious sort of paper: it resembled suede leather and yet gave a harshness to the touch that almost set one's teeth on edge. I felt that this binding was not chosen without a purpose. On its cover were the words:

G. GURDJIEFF

THE HERALD OF COMING GOOD

First Appeal to
Contemporary Humanity

PRICE FROM 8 TO 108 FRENCH FRANCS

PARIS 1933

Inside the book there was a green registration blank with the number of my copy and a space for supplying such details as to whether it was 'acquired accidentally or on advice', the sum paid, and name and address of the adviser. As I had been presented with my copy I escaped this procedure.

The book was an announcement of what Gurdjieff called, without undue modesty, 'Coming good'. By this he meant the books that he was promising to place before the world in the near future. The little book was an amazing publication. It gave you in many instances the impression of the work of a man who was no longer sane. And yet it was impossible to sweep aside Gurdjieff's statements as the self-adulation of an insane mind. (Some of the statements quoted in the earlier pages of this chapter have been taken from *The Herald of Coming Good.*)

Gurdjieff here promises to disseminate the whole of his knowledge, which seems to include many esoteric secrets. He announces the publication of three series of books, comprising ten volumes, the title of the whole series to be 'All and Everything'. The first series will be called 'An Objective Impartial Criticism of the Life of Man', and will contain such subjects as 'The Cause of the Genesis of the Moon', 'The Relativity of Time Conception', and 'Hypnotism'; the second series will be called 'Meetings with Remarkable Men'; the third will be 'Life is real only when "I am".' We are told that the original manuscript is written in 'Russian and Armenian', and that 'the first book of the first series is already being printed in the Russian, French, English and German colloquial languages', and that 'translations are already being finished in the Armenian, Spanish, Turkish and Swedish languages'. Only the three books of the first series will be universally accessible. The contents of the second series will be made known 'by means of readings, open to those who have already a thorough knowledge of the contents of the first series'. 'Acquaintance with the contents of the third series is permitted only to those people who . . . have already begun to manifest themselves . . . in strict accordance with my indications', Gurdjieff explains, 'set forth in the previous series of my writings.'

The style itself exhibited the same strangeness that is manifest in the subject matter. Reading the *Herald* was like the progress of a cart over cobblestones. Most sentences ran on endlessly. The first sentence contained no fewer than two hundred and eighty-four words.

I was more interested in certain personal data than in the fantastic announcement of the coming books. Certain facts of that mysterious life were disclosed here for the first time, though hardly any of them were very clear. Gurdjieff admitted having spent some of his life in

an Eastern monastery in order to acquire certain occult knowledge. 'I decided one day', he says, 'to abandon everything and to retire for a definite period into complete isolation . . . and to endeavour by means of active reflection . . . to think out some new ways for my fertile researches. This took place during my stay in Central Asia, when, thanks to the introduction to a street barber, whom I accidentally met . . . I happened to obtain access into a monastery well known among the followers of the Mohammedan religion.' Gurdjieff admits that he also devoted himself to the study of 'supernatural sciences', that he learned how to perform the usual supernatural tricks, and he relates how he acquired the gift of hypnotism. 'I began to collect all kinds of written literature and oral information still surviving among certain Asiatic peoples, about that branch of science, which was highly developed in ancient times, and called *mekheness*, the "taking away of responsibility", and of which contemporary civilization knows but an insignificant portion under the name of "hypnotism" . . . Collecting all I could, I went to a certain dervish monastery . . . in central Asia . . . and devoted myself wholly to the study of the material in my possession. After two years of thorough theoretical study . . . I began to give myself out to be a "healer" of all kinds of vices and to apply the results of my theoretical studies to them. . . . This continued to be my exclusive preoccupation . . . for four or five years . . . I arrived at unprecedented practical results without equal in our day.'

Gurdjieff discloses that, both through nature and inheritance, there had been in him a predisposition towards supernatural knowledge. 'Great Nature', he writes in his pompous style, 'had benevolently provided all my family and me in particular . . . with the highest degree of comprehension attainable by man. . . .' From his earliest days Gurdjieff appears to have had access to a knowledge not open to most men, and this may be partly responsible for his belief in his own infallibility. 'I had . . .', he says, 'the possibility of gaining access to the so-called "holy of holies" of nearly all hermetic organizations such as religious, philosophical, occult, political and mystic societies . . . which were inaccessible to the ordinary man . . . I had read almost everything existing about these questions . . . a literature accessible to me because of quite accidental circumstances of my life far beyond the usual possibilities of the ordinary man.'

Speaking of his former possessions Gurdjieff says that he had accumulated enormous wealth. It is not disclosed by what means, but he states: 'I began to liquidate my current affairs, which were dispersed over different countries in Asia, and collecting all the wealth which I had amassed during my long life. . . .' This reference

to a long life as far back as 1912 focuses our attention on the subject of Gurdjieff's age. In another place he speaks of having finished certain researches before the year 1892. Both these facts indicate that in 1933 he must have been at least seventy, this being the year of the publication of his book. And yet the man to whom I had spoken that afternoon seemed little more than fifty years old. His looks, his figure, his voice—everything about him suggested that age.

VII

Though Gurdjieff had adherents in England and in France, most of his followers were in America. I was surprised at the number of people there who had attended his classes or seen his dances. Often when I mentioned his name, someone would come forward and give me a dramatic account, illustrated by a personal experience. Though these accounts varied, though some of the speakers swore by Gurdjieff and others almost cursed him, though some considered that he possessed greater and deeper knowledge than anybody alive and others called him a charlatan and a madman, they all agreed that there was something powerful and uncanny about him. Stories were reported to me of people who had given Gurdjieff their whole fortunes in order to help him with his work, and of pupils who were unable to tear themselves away from him, and felt happy in his presence even if they had to suffer from his abuse. I have never heard the word 'possessed' used so often in connection with any other teacher.

And yet there could be no doubt that the man who exercised such a strong influence over his pupils had ceased to be the power he once was. Evasiveness, contradiction and bluff—formerly the weapons in a most complicated system—seemed to have become part of Gurdjieff's very nature. When his mother died in 1925 at Fontainebleau Gurdjieff placed on her grave a huge tombstone with the inscription:

'Ici Repose
La Mère de Celui
Qui se Vit par
Cette Mort Forcé
D'Écrire Le Livre
Intitulé
Les Opiumistes'

('Here lies the mother of one who sees himself forced by her death to write the book *Les Opiumistes*.') The book which he saw himself 'forced' to write has never been heard of.

It was not only in New York that I met people who had been in touch with Gurdjieff. I came across them in several smaller towns and, of course, in California. There were groups of people who had once been instructed by Alfred Orage, and who now tried to follow Gurdjieff's teaching. Even if people had no longer any contact with Gurdjieff, they would become intensely interested the moment I mentioned his name. His indomitable personality never failed to exercise a strange fascination even over people who had denounced him long ago.

VIII

I suspected that Gurdjieff had no intention of giving any precise answers to the questions I had put to him, even supposing I were to meet him again. Nevertheless I decided one evening to visit him at his restaurant.

Gurdjieff was sitting at a table quite near the entrance. Dressed in a dark suit, he looked more commonplace than on the first occasion I had met him. He was smoking a cigarette and writing in a copybook in front of him. The page was covered with large, slightly unformed English calligraphy. Gurdjieff did not recognize me at first, and I had to stoop down to him and explain who I was. After a few seconds he remembered me and asked me to sit down next to him. One of his pupils was with him.

I tried from the very first to ask Gurdjieff precise questions about his teaching. This would save time, and it would reduce the possibility of evasive answers. But I had hardly finished speaking when he got up and walked over to a lady who must have been standing there for some time, anxious to catch Gurdjieff's eye. In her face there was the same expression that I had seen in the face of the disciple during my first interview. When Gurdjieff returned to our table I made another attempt to talk to him, but this time we were forestalled by a middle-aged man who came up to us. It was another of Gurdjieff's pupils. We exchanged names and the man sat down. Meanwhile Gurdjieff ordered coffee with lemon. The waitress must have been used to the order, for she showed no signs of surprise, and returned with the drink a few minutes later. Gurdjieff squeezed out the juice of the lemon into the black coffee, and then dropped the lemon into the cup.

Within ten minutes several other pupils arrived, and our party now occupied three or four tables in a row. Gurdjieff was for ever getting up, walking towards the door, and talking to people who were coming and going. It was impossible to begin a conversation. Nevertheless I had a more favourable impression of him than at my

first visit. He seemed simpler and less sinister. I noticed now for the first time a certain human quality in him. Even his English seemed better, and I began to suspect that its inferior quality during my first interview had been assumed, possibly to provoke 'genuine reactions'. I limited myself to questions about his plans with regard to his new school, to the publication of his books or to other details of his work. But even so he remained evasive, and I could not record a single definite answer.

During one of his frequent absences from the table I began a conversation with Gurdjieff's main assistant, and I noticed that the questions I had been asking his master were making him uncomfortable. Eventually he expressed his anxiety: 'I am afraid you have chosen a wrong method of questioning Mr Gurdjieff. By asking him in such a direct and precise way you almost force him to answer yes or no. He is not used to that, and he does not care for such a form of conversation. Anyhow, I don't think you'll succeed very much. You ask him in a conversation of twenty minutes questions for the answers to which many of us have been waiting for a great many years. None of us dares to put to him such questions'.

As I was leaving for England in a few days' time, and had no chance of following the method of the disciples, it seemed that I should have to depart without receiving answers to my questions—but the frightened faces of the eight or ten people sitting round, and the hushed atmosphere the moment Gurdjieff addressed any of them, had been more explicit than any conversation could have been.

Gurdjieff's pupils did not try to disguise their feelings towards me. They probably considered me an intruder, and my presence was anything but welcome. When they had met me at the beginning of the evening they had cast inquisitive glances in my direction as though fearing that a new disciple had arrived, upon whom their master might waste some of those favours that had hitherto been bestowed upon them. Once they were reassured that I was not a disciple, they seemed to feed their antagonism on my attitude towards Gurdjieff. They probably expected me to worship their hero, and were deeply offended at my failure to do so. Not one of them had given me even the conventional smile normally offered to a newcomer, and they avoided helping me when they noticed my occasional difficulties in understanding Gurdjieff's English. There was no doubt: I had overstayed my welcome, and I rose to go. No one tried to persuade me to stay on, and even Gurdjieff did not utter a word of encouragement. I thanked him, bowed to the assembled company, and walked out into the bracing air of an autumn evening in New York.

IX

When I arrived back in London I went to one of Gurdjieff's former followers in Europe, and told him of my experience in New York.

'Your account', he replied, 'does not surprise me. I have often heard stories like that. Even to me certain things about Gurdjieff were always as inexplicable as they must be to anybody unaccustomed to his wanton methods. And yet he has brought me—and many other people—nearer to truth than anybody else. Mind, emotions and body are no longer antagonistic. Though it is true that many of the things Gurdjieff does and says seem meaningless, yet while you are in the midst of your work, he will say something to you that will give you the answer to questions you have long been pondering. His sense of your problem of the moment and his knowledge of the moment at which you are ripe for the answer are uncanny. At times we had to wait for years, and it was as though Gurdjieff knew exactly how many doubts we had to conquer before we were ready for his answers. You would be wrong to judge his conduct according to ordinary human standards. There seems a richness within Gurdjieff which allows him to do things that would be wrong for our own limited selves. In a way he reminds me of the god Siva.'

'The god Siva?'

'Yes, Siva, the destroyer-god of the god-trinity, the god of many functions, the lord of the spirits of music—and, don't forget, the god of dancing.'

This conversation only renewed and strengthened my conviction that the very teacher who may be of great help to one person may utterly fail to disclose himself to another. Others were enlightened—where I was merely puzzled.

I could dimly discern that the essence of Gurdjieff's teaching contains a truth that everyone in contact with spiritual reality is bound to preach. But I failed to accept his methods in that spirit of trust, faith or understanding, any one of which is essential for the absorption of spiritual knowledge. Sometimes the personality of a teacher is more impressive than his teaching—at other times the reverse is the case. If I found it impossible to accept Gurdjieff and to let him help me in moulding myself, it was because his personality, however strong, failed to convince me. I had been unable to perceive in the man George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff the harmonious development of man.

X

Just as the manuscript of this book was going to the printers I received the following letter:

Captain Achmed Abdullah. *Fifth Avenue House,*
Sunday. *New York City.*

DEAR SIR,

As to Gurdjieff, I have no way of proving that I am right—except that I know I am right.

When I knew him, thirty years ago, in Tibet, he was, besides being the young Dalai Lama's chief tutor, the main Russian political agent for Tibet. A Russian Buriat by race and a Buddhist by religion, his learning was enormous, his influence in Lhassa very great, since he collected the tribute of the Baikal Tartars for the Dalai Lama's exchequer, and he was given the high title of *Tsannyis Khan-po*. In Russia he was known as Hambro Akvan Dorzhieff; to the British Intelligence as Lama Dorjieff. When we invaded Tibet, he disappeared with the Dalai in the general direction of outer Mongolia. He spoke Russian, Tibetan, Tartar, Tadjik, Chinese, Greek, strongly accented French and rather fantastic English. As to his age—well—I would say ageless. A great man who, though he dabbled in Russian imperialistic politics, did so—I have an idea—more or less in the spirit of jest.

I met Gurdjieff, almost thirty years later, at dinner in the house of a mutual friend, John O'Hara Cosgrave, former editor of the *New York World*, in New York. I was convinced that he was Lama Dorjieff. I told him so—and he winked. We spoke in Tadjik.

I am a fairly wise man. But I wish I knew the things which Gurdjieff has forgotten.

Very faithfully,
A. ABDULLAH.

PART THREE

FULFILMENTS

'And ye shall know the truth,
and the truth shall make you free.'
ST JOHN viii. 32.

Introduction: Aryan Gods

I

ALMOST fifteen years lay between the time at which I began my search and the moment at which I began to write of it. In 1934 I decided to revisit the men through whose influence I had once learned so much. I was anxious to see what had become of the work of Stefan George, Rudolf Steiner and Keyserling under the Third Reich.

It became evident to me during the very first days that there was as little room in the new Reich for the old spiritual influences as there was for those of such men as Thomas Mann or Albert Einstein.

The name of Stefan George, the man whose only medium was the German language, seemed to evoke a more enthusiastic echo among young men in Paris than in Berlin; the fame of Steiner was growing in Switzerland, Holland, England, and other countries, rather than in Germany; and Keyserling, whose name was hardly mentioned in Germany, had become something of a hero in Spain, South America and in France. Even Rilke, worshipped by pre-Nazi Germany as were few others, seemed almost forgotten. This was not surprising. The message of each of these men was in no way limited to his own particular country, and affected all people alike. Those Germans for whom those names still had a deep meaning—and they hardly cared to speak loudly about them—formed an infinitesimal minority.

In the case of George, the hero of yesterday was nearly made the hero of today. The Nazi government acted in the spirit of Napoleon's remark, 'They tell me we have no great literature; I must speak to the Minister of the Interior about it', and were anxious to make George the figurehead of German literature.

George's visionary appeals to the native instincts of the German people could easily be misinterpreted as being identical with the new racial doctrine. But he soon dispelled that notion, and when the Government offered to make him President of the new German Academy he declined. Soon afterwards he left Germany and went to Locarno where he died in 1934, away from the country whose language and many of whose spiritual values he—more than any man since Goethe—had helped to re-create. His friends arranged for his funeral to take place with no loss of time, before an official representative of the German government could arrive.

Before I left England on this visit to Germany I had been given

introductions to some of those Nazi leaders who would be able to answer my questions. I went to see several of those men, but they spoke only of politics and of their victory over economic difficulties. They could tell me nothing about that spiritual power that had provoked the strange upheavals in Germany.

I was advised that nowhere should I see a more distinct manifestation of this new spirit than at a demonstration at which the 'Leader' would be present. I was assured that wherever the 'Leader' appeared the love of the masses would show me the mystical powers that guided Germany's new destiny. The best place would be outside the Chancellor's palace, from whence the 'Leader' usually emerged in the early afternoon.

I went to the Wilhemstrasse and joined a crowd of people waiting opposite the courtyard of the Chancellor's palace. It was the same palace in which the aged Disraeli had signed the Treaty of Berlin; in which Bismarck had tried to stabilize the new Reich, and in which the courtly Bülow, the cautious Stresemann and the hesitant Brüning had ruled over Germany. Under the roof of the palace two floating ladies in classical garb supported the Eagle of the Reich. All three were made of a stucco which had acquired the charming patina reminiscent of the days when Berlin was only the capital of the Kingdom of Prussia. At the entrance gates there were policemen and members of Hitler's personal bodyguard. They were over six feet tall, and wore black uniforms with black steel helmets and, round their sleeves, a yellow band with the words 'Adolf Hitler'. They had short modern-looking rifles, and a dagger and a revolver were stuck in their belts. The floating ladies under the roof seemed, all of a sudden, very old-fashioned.

I was one of a group of about a hundred people. There were a number of middle-aged 'Hausfrauen' perspiring heavily under the midday sun, and munching sandwiches that they had brought with them. There were boys of the 'Hitler Youth', with tanned legs and faces, and with a red swastika armlet round the sleeve of their brown shirts. There were young girls, slim, unselfconscious and typical of the new German *Mädchen*. They had little in common with their less prosaic, less good-looking pre-war sisters.

Suddenly the policemen and the bodyguards turned to statues. A long open car drove slowly out of the courtyard. The man at the wheel and his neighbour were both wearing black uniforms adorned with silver. In the rear of the car and next to a third man in black was the 'Leader'. He wore an incongruous mackintosh and no hat. With a rigid gesture of his right arm he acknowledged the greetings of the crowd. The thin mouth under the little black moustache was

shut tight and the face bore a strained and self-conscious expression.

The people round me raised their arms and shouted 'Heil Hitler'; some of them waved handkerchiefs, two or three women threw little bunches of flowers into the car. There could be no doubt as to the warmth of their enthusiasm. I had, however, seen other crowds whose emotions were focused so strongly on the hero of the moment that it looked like some voluptuous self-sacrifice. The enthusiasm in the Wilhelmstrasse failed to disclose to me the nature of the specific Aryan gods.

Finally I was advised to see the leading young workers within the party. I visited several young party organizers, propagandists and private secretaries. They had a blind faith in their new gods and in the *Führer*. Though their names were little known to the man in the street, they were supposed to be at the very core of the Third Reich.

I asked them outright: where are the mystical forces of which your manifestos and books speak so loudly? The young men were obliging and answered in unison: the mystical forces are to be found in Hitler's life and achievement, in his mission and his success. When I pressed them for more exact answers, they said:

'The gods you are looking for are in the fellowship that the Leader restored to German life. The Germans had learned real friendship in the trenches; but they were forced to forget it in the immoral years between 1919 and 1933. The Leader gave them back fellowship.

'The gods you are looking for are in the strength of the Leader. Before him there was no leadership, and Germany was a toy in the hands of private interests or foreign powers. The Leader brought strength and unity of purpose, and he thus inspired youth.

'The gods you are looking for are in the faith of the Leader in his people. Before him politicians relied on the workmen or the bankers, the army or the trade unions, industry or the priests. For the Leader the whole nation is one, and all classes worship him as their only idol.

'The gods you are looking for are in the purity of the race that the Leader is giving his people, and in his care for their health. Today the people know that there is someone who perceives the mystical power that is in their blood, and who prevents them from stooping down below themselves and from allowing that blood to be mixed.

'The gods you are looking for are in the pure character of the Leader. Before him, champagne flowed through the Wilhelmstrasse. Today ours is a Leader who is a vegetarian, a teetotaller, a non-smoker, and whose only relaxation is listening to Wagner and Schumann. His life is so pure that even his enemies cannot find the slightest blemish in it.

'The gods you are looking for lie in the deep religiosity of the Leader. He is not a churchgoer, for the whole nation is a church for him, and to serve his people is his holy service. His Christianity is not theoretical but truly active, and fascinates the masses. It brings them a direct message from the gods you are looking for.'

After the young men had spoken with such enthusiasm and fervour, I realized that I was wasting their time as well as my own; for, in the new Reich, individual spiritual search had evidently been replaced by unquestioning submission to an official propaganda compounded of highfalutin slogans.

CHAPTER X

The Loneliness of Hermann Keyserling

THOUGH I had not seen Keyserling for some twelve years or more, I had followed his career with enough interest to know that his reputation had been fast increasing. The *Tagungen* in Darmstadt, which had been continued for several years, formed only a small part of his activities. Almost every year he had published a new book—provocative, stimulating, full of new light on old truths and displaying a lively imagination. After the *Travel Diary* there appeared a book called *Schöpferische Erkenntnis* ('Creative Understanding'), which contained a synthesis of his main philosophy of 'Significance'. The next book was *Recovery of Truth*, which was partly a continuation of its predecessor. Then came *Menschen als Sinnbilder* ('Symbolical Figures'), a very personal collection of essays, and *Die neuentstehende Welt* ('The World in the Making'), one of the author's most successful books. With his next book, *Das Spektrum Europas* ('Europe'), Keyserling offended most of the nations he had ever visited. His brilliant but superficial analysis of most of the European countries earned him new fame and fresh abuse. The result of a lecture tour through the United States was a bulky volume *America Set Free*. It is an entertaining book, full of unusual matter; and written—such was Keyserling's linguistic facility—in English. But it was too absurd and unflattering and was in consequence boycotted throughout the United States. After a prolonged visit to

South America, Keyserling wrote *South American Meditations*, which he called the essence of his spiritual maturity. As he said later: 'This book gave to South America its soul.' No other man could have made such a statement. But who else could have written this extraordinary book, each one of its five hundred closely printed pages full of startling ideas and bursting with imagination? Edmond Jaloux, the eminent French publicist, wrote of the author of this book: 'He has an almost fabulous volubility of thought. Original ideas, profound reflections, unexpected points of view, varied knowledge, all come from him in almost torrential form. . . . The reader feels slightly dazed before such a formidable abundance of thought.'

More important than the *Tagungen* and the books were Keyserling's lectures. He lectured with the same ease in German, Russian, French or English. He also began to learn Spanish, a language that particularly appealed to him. After a few months he could even lecture in it. What is more, he began to coin his own Spanish words just as he formerly used English, French or German words that were of his own creation. In 1931 he engaged the huge Trocadero in Paris and delivered three lectures in French, and the experiment proved successful, some six thousand people filling the hall every evening. Keyserling continued to enlarge the scope of his international activities. He accepted an invitation from his Spanish friends to hold a congress at Mallorca in the form of a *Darmstadt Tagung*. Most of the leading Spaniards were present, and the congress was considered one of the most outstanding events in the intellectual life of Spain.

Keyserling's linguistic and geographical possibilities enabled him to exercise a certain intellectual influence over people in many different countries. With characteristic self-assurance he would say: 'In my childhood I had a gift for sculpture. But today I don't need to sculpt in stone, I can sculpt nations.'

His fame was greatest outside his own country. Before the Americans realized that Keyserling had shocked them by his unconventional behaviour and offended them by his provocative book, he could claim to be one of the most popular foreigners in the United States. He was famous enough to induce a casual acquaintance to have his visiting cards printed:

CAROL BRENT CHILTON
Friend of Keyserling

But Keyserling's unbalanced criticism of the United States alienated many Americans, and hero-worship was soon replaced by unflattering stories, concocted by important hostesses whose lion-hunting

proclivities had not been satisfied by the philosopher. Keyserling's philosophy was too many-sided to be put into a nutshell and served round dinner tables as a subject for amusing conversation. On the other hand he was too striking a man to be neglected as a subject of table talk. The real issues of his personality were overshadowed by unimportant details. The less frivolous naturally continued to appreciate him for his intellectual achievements. Keyserling, however, never pretended to be a philosopher addressing a small circle of specialists; he was, rather, a 'spiritual inspirer'. He could not possibly limit himself to the select few but had to consider the big majority.

In the autumn of 1933 he was invited to Paris to speak at a big international congress. The French Minister of Education presided over the opening lecture, and the Archbishop of Paris was also present. Paul Valéry was in the chair, and among foreign listeners there were Salvador de Madariaga from Spain and Aldous Huxley from England. Keyserling spoke about *La révolte des forces telluriques et les responsabilités de l'esprit* and at the second lecture about *La communauté des esprits*. The essence of those lectures can be found in a few highly topical sentences in which Keyserling expressed his beliefs in real spiritual leadership. 'How does the spiritual guide act?' he asked his vast audience, and answered himself immediately: 'Not by suggestion like the mass leader, the lion tamer, but like a model, a mould or a fruitful symbol. He does not need the slightest material power. The proper formula or image, be it that of a living being or of an eternal truth, if only it is duly meditated upon, suffices to start a process of realization. It is in this purely spiritual creative activity that I see all the high future mission of the European spirit.'

Keyserling had just published two new volumes written in French, and among those who had praised him enthusiastically were Edmond Jaloux, André Siegfried, Guy de Pourtalès, Havelock Ellis, Thomas Mann, Siegmund Freud, Count Apponyi, Henri Bergson, José Ortega Y Gasset.

While looking through the window of my railway carriage at the shifting scenery of southern Germany I felt that I was indeed on my way to meet a celebrity of the very first water. His fame would have been impressive if he had been a film star or a boxing champion. For a philosopher it was unique.

II

Though I arrived in Darmstadt early on a Sunday morning, I rang up Keyserling without delay. I was asked to come and see him

as soon as I wished. I had been warned by several people that he might be rude, that contradiction would make him lose his temper, and that I should be obliged to listen only to what he might care to tell me. I well remembered his attitude a dozen years earlier, and approached his home not without apprehension.

The house was situated at the bottom of the hill called *Mathildenhöhe*, which the Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig had presented thirty years earlier to the young artists of his day. They had covered it with pretentious 'art' villas in the 'new' style. There were windows flanked by slender lily-like ornaments, and chimney-pots covered with green or mauve tiles.

When I reached my destination I found on the gate an unpretentious enamelled plate with the words *Gesellschaft für Freie Philosophie* ('Society of Free Philosophy'). On the door on the second floor the plate was smaller, but in brass, and it bore not only the words I had found on the gate but also *Schule der Weisheit* ('School of Wisdom'). I must confess that my memories of Darmstadt had led me to expect something much grander.

I rang the bell. Keyserling, wearing white ducks and an open tennis shirt, himself came to the door. As it was a Sunday there was no secretary or servant. Keyserling seemed even bigger than I remembered him; he had grown fatter; but his eyes were still as sparkling, and his vitality seemed, if possible, even greater than ever. We crossed a small ante-room, entered the study and sat down in two leather chairs on either side of a table. Keyserling began to talk without any preliminaries, and I had hardly time to take stock of my surroundings. When, however, I was able to mention that I had just been in Berlin and that I had seen several members of the Government and had discussed topical questions with them, he immediately began to talk about his own troubles.

I could see from the very beginning how anxious Keyserling was to talk. At first I could only understand part of what he was saying: his words chased one another as of old, and before one syllable was finished the next came tumbling out of his mouth. I found listening so strenuous that I decided to concentrate on watching Keyserling himself. His hair and his beard were distinctly greyer; and there was a disorder about his clothes which corresponded to his nervous and erratic speech. The room was small and rather simple. In front of the window there stood a homely writing table with a few manuscript sheets lying about; on one side of the room there was a bookcase, on the other a large table covered with books and newspapers. Through the window beyond some trees I could see a large and ugly church of uncompromisingly puritan appearance.

Slowly I gathered from the flood of words that Keyserling had become one of the most hated men in Darmstadt. It was by no means an enmity of the leading men in Berlin but came from some local authorities. For the last fifteen years Keyserling had been the most famous citizen of Hesse, but unfortunately his fame was international and thus anathema to the local men in power. He possessed most of the qualifications for unpopularity among the local satraps, who prided themselves on their independence and great power. The new idea of leadership (*Führerprinzip*) and of the final responsibilities of a leader only rarely prove successful. Had the name of Keyserling not been famous and had his wife not been the granddaughter of Bismarck, there can be little doubt that the local leaders would have tried to harm him even more than they had yet done. A year earlier they had forbidden him to go to Spain on a lecture tour which would have brought him a large sum of money. As lecture tours were his chief means of earning a living, and as a prophet is but rarely listened to in his own land, this refusal caused a great loss of income to him. Most of the means of injuring him seemed exhausted, so finally the local men of destiny decided to deprive him of German citizenship. This matter, being of capital importance for the proper understanding of Keyserling, must be treated in some detail. Officials had arrived at his residence a fortnight earlier and had forced him to give up his passport, so that he was left legally unprotected.

'I, a Keyserling, who lived in my land like an independent king, I, father of two great-grandsons of Bismarck, am treated like a pariah in a town which became famous through me. The local authorities offered to give me one of those certificates that are given to eastern Jews residing in Germany nowadays. And I, Hermann Keyserling, came to this country in 1918 because I believed I could help Germany; because I thought people like myself were needed here. I came to help, and all I get is hatred. I am getting proofs of admiration from the rest of Germany, from France, Spain, South America to this day; here—I am treated like an outcast. After the war I could have gone anywhere I wanted; I had friends in Paris, in Rome, in Vienna; Arthur Balfour and Lord Haldane were intimate friends of mine; I had better connections in England and France than in this country; but I considered it my duty to settle down here and to do my share whenever I could. And I always loved doing it.'

Keyserling would be put in a very dangerous position if he were deprived for good of his passport. He had sent telegrams to the responsible ministers in Berlin; he had telephoned to Berlin almost daily; he had fought with all his old fighting spirit. The central

authorities in Berlin had telegraphed to the local leaders, ordering them to return him his passport, but the principle of local leadership had become such a powerful weapon that the local men felt strong enough to disobey the orders of their superiors in Berlin.

'It has always been the same throughout my life—one long chain of tragic climaxes. I must always fight to the very end, and I win my victories only when it is almost too late. I assure you it will be the same this time. I have a certain gift of foreseeing things; and I can almost see how it will all turn out now. I have often been faced with the danger of death during a revolution, but each time something has happened at the last moment to save me. It is as though death was still shy of touching me. Look at this wound!' he exclaimed, as he opened his shirt with a dramatic gesture. Across his chest there lay a deep scar—the result of a duel more than thirty years earlier. 'Hardly anyone has ever survived such a wound. I have. I shall survive many more wounds and fights including this one.

'Do you realize that I can claim to be one of the real prophets of the Third Reich? Do you know that I was one of the first to predict all that happened in this country in the last two years? Wait a second!' He jumped up from his chair, opened the bookcase, took out from it a couple of yellow-bound pamphlets, and opened one of them. 'This is an article I published last year. Listen to it.' He put on a pair of spectacles and began to read: 'Is it not true that I was one of the first who had foreseen the future evolution of Germany? . . . In an essay I wrote in 1918 I drew a picture of what is happening today. . . . My essays were one long evocation of national communal life and of a national rebirth. . . . My lectures between 1920 and 1926 were one constant praise of heroism. . . .' He interrupted his readings and said: 'Isn't that exactly what Nazism is doing?' Then he went on quoting from the pamphlet: 'As far back as 1925 I have predicted the present wave of nationalism. . . . One has to count me among the founders of the New Germany. . . .'

Keyserling put aside the pamphlet and went on: 'It is known in Berlin that I am absolutely loyal to the Nazi régime and to the men who represent it. That is quite natural, for I am a German above all. Berlin has always treated me with the greatest consideration and has supported me. But the local pygmies harm me whenever they can. They hate me because I am not afraid of them; because my loyalty to the Third Reich is really much deeper and more seriously founded than theirs, because I am *grand seigneur*, famous, a Keyserling.'

I was becoming accustomed to the strenuous style of my host and

to the speed of his words, and I thought I might venture a question. 'Do you think the German people are religious?' I asked.

'Not at all. We Germans do not believe in something that is beyond the rational, but in a *Weltanschauung*—a philosophy. Thus we are bound to change our beliefs more frequently than other nations. This, however, is not disloyalty, for we believe deeply in the superiority of a new *Weltanschauung* for which we had sacrificed an old one. The English with their intellectual laziness do not care for any *Weltanschauung*, whether old or new. But the Germans must have new ones all the time. That's the reason why we were so impressed by Martin Luther's words: "Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise." The English would have hardly noticed such an evocation; to them it is natural that once you make up your mind about something you stand by it. To the German imagination Luther's words appeared as verging on the miraculous.'

'Do you consider that the Germans have a political instinct?'

'Not as a whole, but we produce many outstanding exceptions. Take Germany's past history alone: Frederick the Great, Freiherr vom Stein, Bismarck—these men are among the greatest statesmen the world has ever known.'

'I seem to remember that somewhere or other you wrote in 1933 about various aspects of the last German revolution. You said that the passion of the German revolutionaries of the last year or two was not political but religious. You also said that the power of Germany's leader is based not on force but on faith. How do you explain such things about a nation that does not believe in what is beyond the rational, that believes more in a *Weltanschauung* than in a religion?'

Keyserling got up from his chair, approached me and looked straight into my eyes, narrowing his own in a sort of half-smile as though apologizing beforehand for his answer. I realized later that he did it often and that the grin was only a trick by which he was trying to tone down some of his replies. He said in a most conciliatory voice: 'How can any intelligent person rationalize about politics? Most political happenings are irrational and inexplicable. It is the same as with ourselves: nine-tenths of what happens within ourselves and of the reasons why we do certain things cannot be explained. You can understand happenings outside yourself only if you try to compare them with the experiences within yourself. Everything outside of ourselves is only an image of phenomena within.'

'I always imagined that the only inexplicable thing in life is death.'

'In a way death is the only thing in German life you can explain', Keyserling answered, as though roused to opposition. I could almost watch a theory entering his restless brain on the spur of the moment and in violent jumps. 'Do you realize that death is the real goal of all Germans? Germans see in death their final fulfilment. You must not forget that in Germany death is the highest virtue of the hero. To sacrifice a son on the altar of death is for a German mother a greater honour than to have given birth to a genius. This is what distinguishes her from other mothers. To enter Valhalla is for the German almost deification. Few of the great mysteries appeal more to the German imagination than the death of the Niebelungen. It is the highest deed in German mythology, the highest ideal—but few foreigners can understand that.'

'Doesn't the idea of purity of blood and health of the race contradict your statement about death?'

'Blood and race come from telluric depths. An appeal to blood is essentially an appeal to the instinct of the earth in man. That is the reason why appeals to the idea of race are so successful. In the domain of worldly success, "earthly" appeals are bound to succeed.'

'I don't quite follow.'

'Look here', Keyserling rose once again as though growing impatient; 'the spirit is the one thing that cannot have direct power on earth. Spiritual power and earthly power are of two entirely different dimensions on two different levels. The spirit cannot act on a level that is first and foremost a level of the earth; it is a force in itself, unconnected with the earth or with any of its expressions. It acts even outside the intellect. That's why it can appeal only to a few people, to those who are capable of producing spiritual reactions within themselves. A nation as a whole cannot possibly follow such an appeal; but it can follow the magnetic power which is contained in the idea of earth and blood. You evoke with them instinctive reactions that do not require any "sublimation" but can manifest themselves spontaneously. It is wrong to oppose the message of blood with that of the spirit as is being frequently done abroad. You must not try to mix up spirit and blood. They are of different dimensions. No epoch understood that contrast better than the Middle Ages. Spirit was embodied for them in the personality of the Pope, and flesh in that of the Emperor.'

'Do you consider men or women as the more adapted to carry what you called the message of the spirit into the world?'

'Why, women of course! While men concentrate on activity and achievement, women are always ready to become receivers of a

spiritual message. Twice in modern history women have carried the message of the spirit into the world. In the days of earliest Christianity Roman women became Christians while their menfolk remained heathen. It was through their wives and daughters that they were slowly converted to the Christian faith. In the early Middle Ages, in the days of the Provençal troubadours, women created in their lives a refinement that carried spirituality among men. Men were rough and ready to violate women. In order to protect themselves, women built up an atmosphere of culture and refinement that kept men at a distance. Distance itself is congenial to spirituality. Spirit acts on the whole better from a distance than in direct contact.'

Almost three hours had passed, and I rose. 'Must you leave? We were just beginning to have an interesting conversation. Do come tomorrow morning to continue our talk. Meanwhile I want you to meet my wife. She plays such an important part in my life that you cannot possibly understand me without knowing her. Can you come and have tea with her in the afternoon?'

Someone knocked at the door, and a tall and slender woman entered the room. Countess Keyserling had dark hair and eyes, a soft, light complexion and an engaging smile.

III

When I returned in the afternoon Countess Keyserling was sitting in her drawing-room preparing tea. The room with its many lamp-shades, photographs, cushions, cigarette boxes and flowers was most decidedly a woman's room. We sat by a window looking out on a little garden with rose bushes and multi-coloured dahlias. Countess Keyserling began a conversation as though she had known me for a long time. She knew what I was interested in and she began to talk about it at once; about how her husband lived and worked, about her children, about her own part in Keyserling's life. She spoke English fluently, though with a German accent. Her womanliness was emphasized by a self-consciousness that made her blush frequently. The shyness was outbalanced by intelligence and self-assurance evidently developed through long experience. She was considerably younger than Keyserling and, while his appearance showed little care, Countess Keyserling was dressed immaculately.

'You will be surprised when I show you my husband's bedroom,' she said, 'not because of its ugliness—it is the ugliest room in the house—but for the library which you will find in it.' We went up-stairs. Indeed it was an ugly room, small, high and ill-lit and cluttered with obsolete pieces of furniture. The most noticeable features of the room were countless bookshelves filled with books—nothing but

detective stories—there must have been hundreds of them. 'It is the only relaxation my husband can find. He does not care for games or the cinema; music interests him much too much; at times he spends entire evenings at the piano improvising, but afterwards he feels more stimulated than before; detective stories are the only natural relaxation that gives him peace. Often I have to read to him while he is in bed, and that sends him to sleep.'

We returned to the ground floor, where I was shown Keyserling's study. It was an odd, chapel-like room, dimly lit, and thousands of books lined the walls. One side of the room was transformed into a sort of Eastern shrine with a bronze Buddha in front of an ancient silk hanging from China and several Chinese and Japanese pictures. 'This was the chapel of the parish priest for whom this house was originally built. My husband hardly ever uses it now, spending most of his time in his office.'

'Does your husband work very systematically and according to a definite plan?'

'No, when he writes he almost appears to become a medium, driven by some power from outside or rather from within himself. He hardly knows what he is writing, and afterwards no one is more surprised at the results than himself. The writing simply pours out of him.'

Was it not the same with the method of his entire philosophy? There was an astounding wealth of thought, but everything in it appeared to be chaotic. Both in his conversation and his books I missed the continuity of a clear structure: the relative positions of chapters might easily be altered without doing much harm to the book; a theme might be treated in far greater or much less detail without affecting the whole. I had the feeling that ideas came to Keyserling incessantly, and that he put them more or less automatically on to paper, bothering little about their form. His artistic temperament must have been alien to a proper method in his work. Keyserling's combination of an obviously artistic disposition in his philosophy, and of an over-abundance in its formal structure, seemed to me one of his outstanding characteristics. It stimulated the reader's thoughts constantly, yet it did not allow him to put the newly found truths into some helpful order.

When we returned to the drawing-room I asked: 'Does your husband read his manuscripts to you?'

'Practically never. I only read his books after they have been published. I have nothing to do with his professional work and we are both absolutely independent. That's probably why we are so happy together. When he goes abroad, especially to a new country, I hardly

ever accompany him. He likes to learn a new country by opening himself to its impressions. In order to do that successfully he must not feel his usual atmosphere around him. My presence would handicap him. I am, as he calls it, his foreign and home secretary and his exchequer. I give him ten marks a month for his personal expenses, which he generally brings back at the end of the month.'

'How do your two boys like being the sons of a famous philosopher?'

'They hardly ever think about it; but they consider him the most amusing companion they know. He treats them as friends and on the other hand be belittles their worries and troubles and develops in them a feeling of detachment and even irony that makes some of the worries of a modern German child more bearable.'

IV

When I arrived next morning at Keyserling's office, a young girl, obviously a secretary, opened the door. I was shown instantly into Keyserling's room, and even before we shook hands he exclaimed: 'I have just heard from Berlin. Orders from the various responsible ministers have been sent to the local leaders; and yet they still refuse to give me back my passport. A few weeks ago they published a declaration that both my sons and myself had been deprived of the Hessian and thus automatically of the German citizenship. Do you know what that means? As they don't deprive my wife of her citizenship, we shall no longer be legally married. For all you know, I am living now with a mistress and not with my wife. They try to catch my wife and myself where they think they can hurt us most, for they know how devoted we are to one another. But they don't know me; I shall fight them to the end. They will have to use brute force to expel a Keyserling and the grandchildren of Bismarck.'

'Do you really think they will dare to do that?' I interrupted.

'It is difficult to say; but experience teaches me that I am spared nothing before my trials are over. That is my destiny.'

'So you believe in destiny?'

'Yes, but destiny is the privilege of only a few people: those who have a definite individual life line. The lives of most people are so intermingled with others—so little individual—that they can only have a *Massenschicksal*, which in each particular case is just fate.'

'Do you also believe in such signs of destiny as, for example, astrology and handwriting?'

'I somehow believe in astrology, but it seems to me wrong to think about it or to consult it. A disinterested belief in it is all I want for myself. It is different with graphology. For years I have known the

man who is the real inventor of the art of graphology. His name is M. J. Crépieux-Jamin. He is a Frenchman, still alive, though he must be nearly eighty. He was in turn agriculturist, clockmaker and dentist. But his main claim to fame is his wonderful gift for graphology. I am praising him not because of what he said of my terrible writing [indeed, I knew only too well how 'terrible' this writing was, and that it generally took me an hour to decipher a letter by Keyserling], though, I confess, I am sensitive to flattery. He said that my handwriting reminded him both of Napoleon's and of Pascal's. I was very pleased with this analysis, especially as I see myself as a mixture of active vitality and sharpness of thought. Of all the many handwritings M. Crépieux-Jamin has seen, he was most impressed by two that I had shown him—those of Annie Besant and of Rabindranath Tagore. He was so moved by the characteristics of Annie Besant's writing that he had tears in his eyes when he analysed it.'

The only photograph in the room was a photograph of Annie Besant with a long dedication.

'You knew Annie Besant well, didn't you?' I asked.

'I met her at Adyar in India during my trip round the world. When we met for the first time Annie Besant approached me with all the priestliness and paraphernalia that were expected from her by her theosophical followers, and she asked me: "Do you know what you were in your previous life?" To which I answered: "I am afraid my memory is so bad that I often have the greatest difficulty in remembering my present life." She looked at me for a second, and then she laughed. We became friends for life. Often in later years, when she was in some difficult or unhappy situation, she would write me a letter, asking me to send her just a line: it would cheer her up. I consider her the greatest woman politician in the world, to whom the Indians will owe a greater debt for their Home Rule than to anyone else. She had a greatness and unity of purpose which were quite unique. She became President of the Theosophical Society only because she could not become Queen of England. Yet I don't believe in her occult powers; I never took that side of her activities seriously. She knew that, and that was probably the reason why we were such good friends.'

I could not refrain from asking, 'Have you ever met Krishnamurti?'

'I met him at the same time that I met Annie Besant. He was then only a boy, and a lot of nonsense was being said and done about the little chap. I consider it his greatest achievement in later life to have lived down the reputation of being the vehicle for the "World Teacher"—for Christ and goodness knows what. He was a delightful boy, and I was very fond of him. It was most amusing to watch

the anxiety of the theosophists, who were frightened lest I should enlighten the boy to such an extent as to make him renounce his claim to the throne of Christ. They always tried to prevent us from conversing without witnesses. I haven't seen him since.'

'What is your opinion of him today?'

Keyserling got up, and took from the bookcase another of the yellow pamphlets that I had seen the day before. 'This is what I wrote about Krishnamurti a few years ago,' he said, and began to read: 'Serious people have assured me in the last few years that though Krishnamurti may not be very great or very deep there can be no doubt about the beauty and purity of his soul. His renunciation of his throne showed me clearly that he is really quite an extraordinary personality of highest moral integrity. The philosophical insufficiencies of his doctrine leave me rather helpless. . . . Judged as an Indian he seems to me to be standing close to the spirit of Moscow. This is also true of Gandhi, and, *mutatis mutandis*, even of Buddha. On the other hand, Krishnamurti is strangely unintellectual for an Indian. This is why he does not like to make any spiritual decisions. If he wants to be the teacher of the whole world his attitude today must be one of antagonism against religion, metaphysics, occultism. . . . In his own way he is a leading representative of the religion of godlessness.'

'You mentioned Tagore before . . .'

'Oh, *welch ein Mensch!* I simply adore him. I don't care for his poems, because lyrical poetry at its best bores me; the only form of poetry I can cope with must be dramatic or heroic. But Tagore's genuine spirituality always showed me how great and beautiful his character was. Nevertheless I no longer have a desire to see him; I prefer to love him from a distance.'

Another obvious question came into my mind. It was not tactful perhaps to examine Keyserling as to his attitude towards men who might be considered his 'competitors'; nevertheless I asked: 'What about Rudolf Steiner?'

'I have never met him, though you may have heard the gossip about some quarrel between us more than ten years ago. That, however, does not alter my admiration for his enormous gifts. He possessed a genuine second sight, real occult powers and a tremendous intellectual and spiritual knowledge; ultimately, however, I see in Steiner the acting of an evil power.' Keyserling's words surprised me greatly, but before I could find time to interrupt him, he continued: 'In the last years of his life Steiner developed a tremendous lust for power, and finally he was eaten up by it: the cancer from which he died was nothing else than the expression of the lust for power that

destroyed him. Cancer is a symbolical disease, and lust for power becomes in spiritual regions black magic. Steiner's occult activities were full of what you may call white magic; it is therefore not easy to see a clear spiritual picture of him. I personally "feel" him as ultimately bad.'

Though I knew that Keyserling's statements were utterly unfounded, and terribly malicious, I did not care to begin a discussion which on Keyserling's part would have been based mainly on assumptions and not on knowledge. Keyserling's information was obviously inspired by malignant gossip, and I knew how dangerous it was to judge a man whom one did not know personally. I went on with my enquiries.

'What do you think of Mme H. P. Blavatsky? Was she the fraud that some recent books make her out to be?'

'Nonsense, she was incredibly gifted. Yet it is most difficult to understand people like her, people who are, foremost, mediums of greater spiritual forces. In their ordinary conscious state they often have to lie and to be frauds. Mme Blavatsky undoubtedly often produced silly tricks with which she tried to satisfy the occult greed of her followers, constantly awaiting miracles. But she had a genuine occult power.'

'And Leadbeater, Annie Besant's notorious collaborator—did you know him? . . .'

Keyserling smiled as though reminded of some amusing situation. 'Indeed, I did. He, too, had genuine occult powers—infinitely more than Annie Besant—and it was quite true that he suddenly "saw" occult colour images of your character, a country or an event. But it was just like having a fine voice or eyes of a particular colour. He was stupid, yet I liked him for his quaint mixture of occult gifts and an incredible naïveté. His occultism was as genuine as his pomposity. Which reminds me of Stefan George. You know, many Germans consider him the greatest German since Goethe. I never could understand why he should have exercised such an enormous influence. His few volumes of poems could not have done it. To me, of course, they mean very little. I imagine his success was a success of silence. Hardly anybody knew him or ever saw him; he never uttered a word except in his five or six small books; he never received a journalist; he was hardly ever photographed. He was silence personified, and silence impresses us Germans.'

Up till now our conversation had somewhat evaded the questions which should have been put to a man who was first of all a spiritual teacher. The very fact that I had not asked them, and that Keyserling himself had hardly mentioned the subjects that might have been

touched upon in this connection, made me wonder whether he could be called a teacher in the sense in which I had understood that word hitherto. As, however, I was certain that most people would have asked them, when faced by a man like Keyserling, I decided to discharge them at him.

The first question was: 'Do you believe in yoga and meditations?'

'Eastern meditations are almost always useless for Western people. The same applies, of course, to yoga. Certain Jesuit and Freemason meditations may be useful for us. Whether to practise them, or not, is a purely individual matter which everyone has to decide for himself. For me personally meditation has acquired in the course of years a new meaning. Facing reality in a positive way, and without evading it, is for my active temperament a form of meditation. If I do not shrink from the difficulties of life, but contemplate them, then I consider I have done my kind of meditation. Learning through direct experience, through pain and suffering what your innermost attitude is when facing reality, is the best form of spiritual exercise.'

My second question: 'Do you consider that celibacy is necessary for spiritual achievement?'

'General rules of this kind cannot be given, and one has to be very careful with celibacy. Once again I must repeat that the first thing to do is to find out about one's inner organization. The moment you know what is individual in yourself, then you also know whether to follow the urge of your sex or to suppress it. But remember one thing —things that are by their very nature of a physical kind, have to be dealt with in a physical way.'

The third question: 'Do you consider that the Churches in the Western world are doing their duty and that they are still an important channel for the finding of truth?'

'I am glad that there are Churches. There are a great many people who need them and who can find happiness only through and in a Church. For them Churches must remain. Besides, why destroy them, even if you think you have found something better? One ought never to destroy old institutions because one thinks one has found better ones. This applies to cultural, political, in fact all institutions in communal life. Old and new institutions must live on side by side: the better ones will gradually eliminate those of less value by their very superiority. To many people Churches mean nothing today: those people follow other routes in order to find their God. I personally am unable to follow anybody's authority. You may consider that blasphemous or arrogant, but what is the good of pretending that one believes in something if one doesn't! If I acknowledge any individual master at all, it is Buddha: not on account of a special

superiority of his teaching, but merely for the fact that he, too, believed in no one else and in nobody's authority but his own. Most of the other teachers speak for someone else; even Jesus Christ spoke not in his own name but in the name of his Father. I myself speak only and entirely for myself and in my own name and for that I take the full responsibility. You don't need to listen to me, but, if you do, you must accept that. If people find that they have to follow a particular teacher, Steiner, Annie Besant, Krishnamurti, or Buchman, let them do it. But far be it from me to preach for anybody or against anybody. You must decide for yourself whom you want to follow.'

Next evening I dined with the Keyserlings. There were no other guests, and our conversation started with the same intensity and lack of preliminaries as did the morning talks. I could see that something in connection with the passport affair had happened. This affair had become a kind of *leitmotiv* of my stay in Darmstadt, and every new 'act' of my visit began with this particular overture.

'I have received an air mail letter from my lawyer in Berlin written this afternoon. He says that though the responsible ministers in Berlin insist upon my being given back my passport, it's too late to get them to restore it to me. He ends his letter with the words "you will get your *Ausbürgerungsurkunde* (denaturalization papers) at any moment". Well, it seems that today is the last day. You will probably have the pleasure of witnessing the arrival of the police to legalize my denationalized status. They must appear here before midnight.'

When we sat down to dinner, I asked Keyserling: 'Why haven't you answered all the calumnies and misrepresentations about you which have been circulated by your enemies and which are ultimately responsible for your present state of affairs?'

'I never answer calumnies. It would be fatal to my very spirit. If you make no answer to calumnies, they go through your spiritual self like waves, and as though you were non-existent; sooner or later they disappear entirely. On the other hand, if you do answer them, you evoke similar evil powers to the ones used against you, and you will never be able to rid yourself of them.'

Keyserling went on talking. His vitality seemed even greater than usual. He was enjoying his meal, taking huge helpings of every course, except the pudding, of which he never partook. My former critical attitude was changing into genuine sympathy. He was an impressive human animal, powerful, vital, active and positive; conceited, arrogant, proud, egotistic and yet generous; childlike,

exuberant and almost intoxicating. It was quite obvious that he could only be judged by his own standards, and that it would be futile to pigeonhole him in any of the usual human or philosophical categories. You could disagree with him, you could dislike his manner or his self-centredness, but you had to admit that he was an exceptional personality, and that there was an intellectual fertility in him which few people possess. School, labels, theories—all these seemed of little importance. What mattered was Keyserling's own colourful personality.

Conversation during dinner was more personal than during our morning talks. Even the prospects of the alarming visit that awaited Keyserling could not upset him. He was talking of friends, of his ancestral home, of his travels and his children. Such conversation would have gone on endlessly had there not been a few more questions I was determined to ask. 'What is your method of work?'

'I never make plans for a new book. When my subsonsciousness is filled with enough material I suddenly think of a title or perhaps of a date when the book should be finished. I then settle down and write continuously for a number of weeks. I become almost a medium and I hardly realize what the book will be like. Length, plan, number of chapters matter nothing to me, and it is only when the book is ready that I become conscious of all those things, and only then do I begin to introduce them into my manuscript.' It was not difficult to visualize this process of writing: it must have been akin to Keyserling's manner of speech, for he was obviously far more a speaker than a writer. You could see how during a conversation thoughts were coming to him from nowhere and how conversation stimulated him to deliver monologue after monologue.

Neither Countess Keyserling nor I drank more than half a glass of wine; Keyserling drank the rest, and also a whole bottle of champagne. When we left the table and settled down in the drawing-room, he said: 'For many years I did not drink at all. But my active temperament prevents me from sleeping. Very often I don't sleep more than an hour at night. When, however, I drink a bottle of wine and a bottle of champagne, I can sleep. A famous doctor in Frankfurt found out the reason for my strange reaction to wine. Wine, instead of raising my blood pressure as it does in the case of most people, lowers it, acting as a sedative. That's why it makes me sleep. You can imagine what stories were invented about me in that connection.' I preferred not to pursue the subject, and Keyserling went on: 'People always invent stories about me, for example, about my health. They don't understand that I never get ill unless my consciousness has to do something against my subconsciousness'.

'What do you mean by that?'

'This spring I was supposed to go on a big lecture tour to Spain. All the seats were sold, but at the last moment I was not allowed to go. I had to remain here, but, when the time for the first lecture arrived, I developed a severe throat disease. When you wrote to me in the spring suggesting that you should come at that time to see me, I had to refuse on account of this throat trouble, which for weeks prevented me from seeing anybody. My throat had been preparing itself for speaking and, when the moment arrived, it simply wanted to speak, and revolted against the enforced silence.'

Suddenly a bell rang. It was well after eleven. Keyserling himself left the room to open the door. Countess Keyserling tried to go on with our conversation, but we could hear voices outside. Suddenly the door was flung wide open and Keyserling reappeared. He was shouting at the top of his voice: 'What did I tell you, what did I tell you? They have sent me back my passport. Look, here it is, without any marks or changes. In the last moment their courage failed them. Look, here it is. Didn't I tell you? My life is always like this. Could any stage producer have managed the affair more effectively?' Indeed, it was astounding. I was thankful that Keyserling's worst anxiety was over, and that I had been able to witness this incident of the passport to its conclusion. Keyserling opened another bottle of beer, and forced me to stay for another hour.

VI

Next morning when I arrived at his office I told him that I had decided to leave Darmstadt that very afternoon. 'After our various talks during the last few days,' I said, 'I can imagine what your aims are today; but I would like to hear them from you directly. I remember the social flutter you caused some years ago, and I can see how different things have become. I would like to know what you have to say about it.'

Keyserling poured some black coffee into a low, red lacquer cup, which always stood on the table, and his face of an Eastern autocrat assumed a softness which only rarely illumined it. More slowly than usual he said: 'You have seen the worries I have to go through; you can picture for yourself how difficult the last years have been. The main chapter of my new book which I am finishing now is called "Loneliness". It is not by accident that I had to write so much about that subject during these months. But you have seen how cheerful I remain. Have I ever struck you as being gloomy or depressed? Obstacles as you know, only make me stronger. The effect of the experiences of the last few years, however, has been to make me

withdraw more and more into my shell. I begin to see that the outside world, people, things, events are nothing but the attempt to keep us from losing ourselves in the much more lively, more exciting, more bewildering and more important world of our inner selves. The older I grow the more this seems to me the chief use and meaning of the outside world. Withdrawing into my inner self I find enough to keep me busy and happy for the rest of my days'. He paused for a second, which he only rarely did, but after having taken another sip of coffee he continued: 'My goal can only be to radiate spiritual reality. I don't want to convince anyone; people must come of their own free will as you have come, or they must ask me to visit them to deliver a lecture. Spirit cannot radiate through compulsion or even persuasion. Therefore, I never try to persuade people; they must accept my words as I put them or not at all. I don't believe in argument when we deal with spirit. Spirit can only act in an atmosphere of perfect freedom. Spirit has nothing to do with your brain or your intellect, which can be forced to do this or that. The elements of spirit are faith and courage. It needs tremendous courage to lead a life conceived by the spirit. And you can achieve its deepest realization only if you base it on faith. I have understood fully only in the last few years that spirit is the highest and purest realization of faith and courage.

'To come back to your question about my success after the war—I can only say that it wasn't my success, but a success forced upon me by other people. It was a success of fashion and therefore quite unreal. Today you will find my name as a philosopher and a teacher mentioned but little in Germany. Society has for the most part deserted me. Look at this office: the remains of the "School of Wisdom". And yet today I feel that I am having real success and real influence. Today individual people come to me to ask my advice or just to listen to me. Such contacts mould people, create spiritual readjustments. Men in responsible positions, who have achieved worldly success, arrive here a thousand times gloomier than I have ever been, worried, frightened about the country's and their own future; but they find me serene, buried in my work, writing new books, facing life as it comes, and without constructing abstract theories. Most of them leave me cheered and strengthened. This is more important than any books I have ever written or am ever likely to write. The success of ten years ago was sham. It is today that matters.'

I looked round me. The smallness and simplicity of the room—the unpretentious furniture, the bare writing table—suddenly became particularly striking, and I began to understand that spirit can best

be realized if the outer shell is broken. In his present loneliness Keyserling seemed to radiate something that had remained hidden while he was enjoying his spectacular successes. Now it seemed to matter little whether or not chance would allow him once again to lecture to great crowds and impress fashionable audiences. What mattered most was that Keyserling himself had realized that only spiritual radiation from man to man could change people and give them a vision of truth.

I felt very grateful when I got up to shake hands with Keyserling and say goodbye.

VII

I heard a few months after my visit to Darmstadt that the German *Government Gazette* published a declaration officially restoring German citizenship to Keyserling and his sons. In November 1934, Keyserling was invited to deliver a public lecture in Berlin.

Once again Keyserling could go abroad. The congress in Spain, that he had had to cancel in the spring, could take place early in 1935. After the congress, Keyserling lectured all over Spain and later on in Italy and in Paris, and his tours were a great success. He was acclaimed wherever he went, and the inner fulfilment seemed to be finding its external reward.

CHAPTER XI

The Testament of Rudolf Steiner

WHEN, several years later, I set out to find for myself the 'Testament' of Rudolf Steiner I knew that the object of my pursuits had not died with its maker. Though I had not kept in direct contact with anthroposophy I knew that it had developed from a stage of investigation and discovery to one of practical work and acknowledged achievement.

The Anthroposophical Society had suffered the same fate to which so many movements crystallized round one man have been submitted. After Steiner's death it had split into two sections. The more official section, with its headquarters at the Goetheanum at

Dornach, was led by Steiner's widow and the famous Swiss poet, Albert Steffen; the other included some of Steiner's closest friends and several of the leading personalities in the movement.

But anthroposophy had become too important a movement to be affected by personal disagreements, and was being absorbed even by people who had no direct contact with it as a movement.

The Anthroposophical Society, too, was growing steadily. In New Zealand, in Java, in South Africa, and even in Honolulu there were either branches of the Society, or anthroposophical farmers, doctors, educationists.

There were small anthroposophical groups in England even before the war, but a society was not established till after Steiner had delivered a series of lectures in that country during the summer of 1923. The countries in which his ideas had most effect were Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Austria, Czechoslovakia. It is difficult to say how far they have invaded English life; but, if books are at all a reliable measure of the popularity of a doctrine, Steiner must be far more widely known in England than is indicated by the infrequent appearances of his name in the press. Steiner's own literary legacy is enormous. Close on a hundred of his books have been translated into English—some of them volumes of many hundreds of pages. There are probably few scientists or philosophers who have left a larger bulk of work.

The external growth of the anthroposophical movement showed that it was strong enough at its founder's death to withstand even the dangers of organization and discipleship. In a way the rapid growth of the movement is surprising. Steiner himself insisted over and over again that a many-sided doctrine such as his could not be forced like a hothouse plant. Hence his aversion to all forms of self-advertisement. Unlike Annie Besant, he was not a showman and was opposed to propaganda. It was not without significance that the founder of anthroposophy was not a German but an Austrian. Many of the most valuable elements in Germany's spiritual and cultural life originated not in Germany but in the countries surrounding her.

II

I went first to the Goetheanum at Dornach, and found there everything exactly as I had expected: a huge impressive building—a monument in cement to its dead creator—studios, laboratories, devoted discipleship and scholarly research work.

Except for my visit to Dornach and my much later visits to several of Steiner's former friends and pupils, I expressly abstained during

my journey through Central Europe from arranging any meetings with anthroposophists, and preferred to wait and see whether I should come across their activities in the ordinary course of events. Though I only spent a short time on the Continent my luck was extraordinary, and I realized that anthroposophy had become one of the few spiritual movements of our time that have penetrated into almost every field of human activity.

I went first to stay with someone on a country estate not far from Berlin. I arrived late at night, but before taking me up to my room my host said: 'By the way, I hope you won't mind a guest who is coming here tomorrow for the day. I had invited him before I knew that you were coming to Germany—so I couldn't put him off. But I'm sure you'll like him. He is a young minister.'

I forgot all about the minister till his arrival after breakfast next morning. He had a frank and intelligent face, and had preserved a boyish spontaneity, which expressed itself in sudden bursts of laughter. He was minister at one of the Christian Community churches which had been established in connection with anthroposophy, and he left one in no sort of doubt as to his devotion to his profession.

It was a warm, sunny day, and we spent most of it walking in the park, the while Herr M. discoursed on one of the last chapters of Rudolf Steiner's testament.

'How was it,' I asked, 'that Steiner who was against the establishment of a new church, and who always emphasized the fact that anthroposophy is not a religion and does not want to create dogmas, became head of such a church?'

The Herr Pfarrer flushed. 'That is not true,' he exclaimed, 'I fear you have utterly wrong notions of our church and of its history. You must have been as misinformed as the rest. The doctor always insisted that he was not establishing a new church.' (Steiner was always referred to as the 'doctor'.) 'He was only the adviser and "spiritual inspirer" of a church created by professional theologians of their own desire.'

'How, then, did it all begin?' I interrupted.

'Some two years after the war,' replied the young minister, 'small groups—comprising both laymen and ministers—formed themselves in various towns. These people realized that the Evangelical church was losing its influence, and were therefore anxious to infuse new vitality into it. They had no connection with one another, but several of them had heard of Steiner's extraordinary pronouncements on Christianity. In 1921 some of them visited him. When they asked him if he believed in the possibility of a religious revival through deeper spiritual knowledge, Steiner affirmed that he did, and

promised to give them definite instructions, provided they visited him as a whole group. The young men—for most of them were men of between 20 and 30—assembled in June at Stuttgart, where Steiner gave them his first "Lecture Course for Theologians". He promised that if they would find, say, ten times as many young men genuinely anxious for the future of the church, and willing to work seriously for its reformation, he would tell them more. Such a group collected in Dornach, and Steiner gave them six lectures which contained perhaps the profoundest things said in our time about religion. You may have heard how impressed orthodox theologians were when Steiner spoke to them about Christ.'

'Yes, Friedrich Rittelmeyer writes about that in his book on Steiner,' I answered.

'Rittelmeyer was present at many of those lectures. In fact Rittelmeyer had always been the head of our church—not Steiner. But to come back to my account—these young men were so deeply moved and shaken in their traditional beliefs by what Steiner said in his lectures that they decided to form a new religious community, based on Steiner's revelations. The widow of the German poet Christian Morgenstern put at their disposal the stables in her country place, and it was there that the new constitution of the church was evolved after many weeks' hard work. Though Steiner approved of it, he went on repeating that he must be considered merely as an adviser and spiritual mediator of the new church. His main concession was that, by the laying on of hands, he ordained, at an inaugural ceremony in September 1922, Dr Rittelmeyer who, as you probably know, had been for years one of the leaders of the Evangelical church in Germany and one of the most distinguished preachers of our day. Afterwards Rittelmeyer ordained a number of young ministers who wished to serve the new religious community.'

'What is new in your church?'

'The doctor was asked one day to explain the difference between anthroposophy and our creed. He answered: "Anthroposophy addresses itself to man's need for knowledge and brings knowledge; the Christian Community addresses itself to man's need for resurrection and brings Christ." '

'In what sense am I to understand this?' I asked.

'We try to disseminate that magic reality which Christ has instilled into every church. In most churches that power has been cloaked with so many obscure forms and ceremonies that it has become unintelligible, no matter how willing the congregation may be to take an active part in it. In our church we try to make everything, including the language, clear. We use no Latin: we use the language

of the country in which the service is being held. Our congregation is conscious of what is happening during the service, it collaborates with the minister, and is not lulled into lazy self-contentment. I don't think you can say the same of the congregations of most of the older churches.'

III

After my visit to Berlin, I proceeded to the Rhineland to stay with a friend whose chief hobby was his farm and a magnificent garden. On previous visits I had always been taken for a walk through it soon after my arrival. Since I arrived just before dinner it was arranged that I should see the garden next morning. 'You'll find great changes in the garden', my friend said; 'it is cultivated in an entirely different manner. I run it on biological-dynamic methods.'

'What methods?' I asked.

'The methods discovered by Rudolf Steiner. Many of the more advanced landowners and gardeners in Germany apply them nowadays. I shall tell you no more. You can judge for yourself tomorrow morning.'

The real surprise came during dinner. My friends had two children, and the little boy had been suffering from mastoid. Since the house was in the middle of the country the doctor had to come a long way from town, and it was generally arranged that he should stay for lunch or dinner. In fact, he was to dine with us that very evening. My hostess said that she was anxious for me to meet the doctor, who had succeeded in his treatment of her children where specialists from Cologne had failed. He applied anthroposophical methods, and he was at the head of a hospital for children in a neighbouring town.

I was not favourably impressed at first, for his voice and manner were unpleasantly Germanic in their impatient and arrogant tone; but during dinner I had to admit that in his knowledge of human nature he far surpassed the average German doctor. His professional success proved that his knowledge was not merely theoretical.

'I had been a doctor for almost fifteen years,' he said, 'before I discovered anthroposophical medicine. Naturally I was very sceptical at first, and I looked upon it as a new form of quackery. Then I read one of Rudolf Steiner's lectures to doctors, and was amazed at his deep insight into the very essence of medicine. That induced me to read more about anthroposophy and Steiner. Eventually I decided to undergo a proper anthroposophical training, and I worked for over a year like a young student. I think I can claim that

since then my understanding of the human body and the human being is deeper than that of my colleagues, who base their knowledge on the usual medical study and experience alone.'

IV

Next morning my friend took me round the garden. At dinner the night before I noticed how good the home-grown vegetables had been. Yet the determination to remain impartial made me, if anything, more sceptical than I should normally have been, even when my friend bade me compare the flowers, fruit and vegetables grown according to the new methods with those near by which, for reasons of experiment, were still cultivated in the ordinary way. My friend took me to a section of a field where tomatoes had been grown. Those grown by the old methods in one corner were much smaller than the others.

'Do you know the reason for this difference?' my friend asked. 'The bigger tomatoes were sown exactly forty-eight hours before full moon; the others were sown at some other time.'

'Is this the only difference?' I enquired incredulously.

'Yes, otherwise they have been treated in exactly the same way. Sowing in accordance with planetary constellations is one of the many new methods revealed by Steiner.'

I was shown that not only human beings but animals also noticed the superior quality of food grown according to Steiner's methods. 'Since we have begun to manure and cultivate some of our fields by the new method,' my friend explained, 'neither cows nor sheep will graze on other fields. As it takes time to reorganize all the fields, it has become something of a problem to satisfy our "gourmet" cattle.' The same was true of the chickens: since they had been fed on food grown in the new manner, they were most reluctant to eat ordinary food.

When I arrived back in England I immediately settled down to an intensive study of anthroposophy in ordinary life. England with her slowness in adopting new methods and her mistrust of 'foreign improvements' was hardly the ideal country for such investigations. On the other hand, the very conservatism of English life, by preventing any exaggerated enthusiasm, would show the intrinsic value of the new method.

The strong position of theosophy in England impeded the growth of anthroposophy. While on the Continent many who were once theosophists had begun to follow Steiner, in England only a few such

conversions had occurred. Theosophy was emphatically a British movement; its leader had been for many years an Englishwoman, and its European headquarters were in London. In spite of all this I soon discovered that anthroposophy had entered deeper into English life than was at first apparent. Even the sales of Steiner's books were growing; and yet his books are written in a style which does not make for easy reading. Mr H. Collison, Steiner's English translator, told me that 'the doctor' would make no concessions of style in the translation of his books. Mr Collison had suggested that it would be helpful in places to simplify the English version, since the English mind was not trained in the same way as the German. Steiner replied that such a concession to the laziness of a reader would be a departure from truth. He considered that to make his books easier to read would be an unworthy concession of truth to personal profit. He preferred to wait till the books became popular on their own account.

VI

I was anxious to find in England the remarkable results of Steiner's agricultural theories which I had found on the Continent, for the climatic and agricultural conditions of the two areas differed considerably from one another. As far as I could judge, after visiting several farms run on anthroposophical lines, Steiner's methods had been carried out in England with similar results.

Steiner called his agricultural discoveries the biological-dynamic method. One might say that, beginning with the name 'anthroposophy', most of the terminology of the movement is particularly cumbersome; but, as Steiner would never allow the slightest distortion of truth, the necessity for these names becomes evident. In calling his agricultural system the 'biological-dynamic method' he acknowledged that life is a manifestation of forces: so if we want to influence these forces we must work dynamically.

Steiner formulated his agricultural methods in 1924, a year before his death. Though his method required a revolutionary change in one of the most conservative of human activities, it was widely accepted within a few years. Steiner himself warned his followers that his suggestions could not produce results in less than four years. Nevertheless there were on the Continent over a thousand farms, landed properties and market gardens run according to his ideas. Even in Great Britain, the last European country to follow up Steiner's suggestions, several farms had introduced his method.

Steiner expounded his agricultural ideas at a special series of lectures to a gathering organized by a leading agricultural expert,

Count Carl Keyserlingk, who controlled a number of large properties in Silesia. Steiner's lectures were arranged for professional agriculturists only, and they are the basis of his whole biological-dynamic method. The experts attending these lectures were so impressed by them that an experimental circle was founded in order to test them. Soon afterwards similar bodies were created in various parts of the country. Ten years later, there were some two thousand experimental stations, gardens and farms, all over the world.

Steiner's agricultural methods are based on his acknowledgement of the earth as a living organism, not unlike a human being, and the need for it to be treated accordingly. Intimately related to this is his warning that humanity will probably die of starvation within the next hundred years if it does not abandon the use of agricultural remedies containing chemical poisons. He drew the attention of his listeners to the generally acknowledged fact that most of the soils in the so-called civilized countries are sick as a result of the use of chemical fertilizers. Our soils have become so encrusted, solidified and sour that they can be kept healthy only by heavy doses of lime.

The *New Statesman and Nation* published in 1932 an article on Steiner's agricultural methods, and admitted that his thesis of the death of the soil was a scientific truth. 'Steiner's theory', it read, 'was that we are stimulating the earth and its products to the detriment of both. . . . Agriculturist and horticulturist keep the earth in a state of feverish and unhealthy activity. . . . At first his ideas were treated with contempt, but of late there has been no lack of medical evidence in their support. . . . It is impossible in the face of the evidence to avoid an uneasy feeling that the modern stimulus of production is accountable for the spread of disease in the vegetable, animal and human kingdom. . . .' Before concluding his article the writer asks the important question: 'Is it not reasonable to suppose that there is a limit to the stimulus that may be applied to the lands for the forcing of crops?'

Legitimate agriculture and medicine are constantly giving us new proofs that the intrusion of chemicals into agriculture in the form of ready-made manure, sprays, bug killers and fertilizers destroys both the quality of the soil and of the products grown on it. The Swiss Cheese Federation, one of Switzerland's most important economic bodies, decided that no cows were to be allowed on pastures situated under trees sprayed with poisonous mixtures, and that none of their manure was to be treated with the usual chemical stimulants, such as iron sulphate or super-phosphates.

Steiner, for whom life and nature are an indivisible whole, regards nature as in a constant state of fluctuation, of evolution—that is,

in short, as something dynamic. A farm, or indeed any agricultural unit, is for him an organism with an inner living current. You cannot treat it merely as an economic unit without considering its living faculties. The same inner balance that exists in the human body must be maintained in a farm. There should be enough cattle to produce all the manure required, and the amount of pasture and of the various products, such as grains, vegetables and fruit, should be balanced in such a way as to make the farm as self-supporting as possible under modern conditions.

Steiner demands an even more subtle form of acknowledgement of the living character of a farm. Suppose someone buys an old farm and tries to modernize it. He pulls down an old barn, builds a garage, cuts down some trees and rearranges his fields. In its long existence the farm has developed its individuality and has become one body of which the different fields, buildings or trees are the various limbs—and a limb cannot be cut away without a disturbance of the inner balance which will prove detrimental to the whole. The fields, trees or plants will probably yield less. Such a method can only be avoided if the new owner tries to enter into the ancient spirit of the farm, if he lives in it long enough to be imbued with its individuality deeply enough to understand both its visible and its invisible unity and its inner equilibrium. Only then will he begin to know where improvements should be introduced, where the farm is 'tired' of an old tree, where it requires the replanting of a field. Some old-fashioned farmers, 'born' with a genius for their job, feel instinctively those hidden relations and necessities of their farm. Steiner's followers do not base their knowledge on such instincts (possessed only by a few), but on scientific discoveries. These discoveries were initiated by Steiner, and developed later on by farmers themselves and in special laboratories.

VII

How can the earth be saved from premature death? The answer of the biological-dynamic method to this is: by intensification of its living qualities and by elimination of all methods that kill it. This applies most of all to the chemical poisons that have been introduced into agriculture in modern times. The soil must not be stimulated artificially, but its natural functions must be enhanced, and this cannot be achieved by introducing dead matter in the form of chemicals.

Anthroposophical farmers produce their own manure out of natural remnants to be found on the farm, such as animal dung, vegetable remnants, old foliage, bones and other natural refuse.

Out of such remnants large compost heaps are built, and such plants and herbs are added to them as have beneficial effects upon our health. Steiner indicated that the following six plants should be used for that purpose: dandelion, yarrow, nettle, valerian, camomile and oak rind. The qualities of those plants are strengthened by a special preparation, and their use engenders in the soil the same chemical processes that are caused by artificial manure, but instead of being forced upon the soil suddenly, those processes grow in it organically. There is no sudden shock as with ready-made fertilizers, but the natural faculties of the soil are intensified. Special sprays are used for the prevention of diseases, the principal one being made of silica. But once again, it is not used in an artificial but in its natural form as part of equisetum tea. Every farmer should himself understand the production of these manures and sprays.

Scientific examination has shown that soils treated in this way contain much more of the microbes necessary for the working of a soil than is usual, whilst their products contain far fewer of the harmful microbes than are found in other products.

Once we realize that the soil and the farm, with everything that lives and grows on it, are living organisms and parts of a far greater macrocosm, we must acknowledge the relations between them and other parts of the universe. Not only are the four seasons, the sun, the wind, and the rain parts of the universe that affect the earth and life upon it; the influence of the other planets and of the moon is of equal importance. I was taken over a wheatfield on one of the anthroposophical farms in England. One section of the field was planted exactly forty-eight hours before the full moon and other sections ten and twenty hours later. While the wheat planted forty-eight hours before full moon grew evenly and fully, the rest of the field showed uneven green patches of varying size and thickness.

Steiner would explain to his pupils his own spiritual perception of a new discovery and he would then ask his agricultural collaborators to test it in the usual scientific way. In most cases he also indicated the exact method of the required test. The research work in laboratories usually proved that both his discovery and his prescription for the experiment were right; and there is already a huge volume of scientific evidence testifying to the correctness of his perceptions.

Steiner explained why it is better to sow the seed in the afternoon, when the earth is, so to speak, breathing in, and is more inclined to take the seed into her womb; why the watering of plants and the application of manure, especially liquid manure, should be done in the evening; why reaping and harvesting should be done

in the early morning hours; why seeds should be sown during the waxing of the moon; why plants, vegetables and flowers remain much fresher when cut in the very early morning; why the influence of the planets and the moon are able to work upon the substances in the earth only when these are no longer in a solid state; in what way the planet Jupiter affects the metal tin, the Moon—silver, Saturn—lead, and the Sun—gold.

There was nothing mysterious in Steiner's indications of the connection of life with the planetary system. Steiner discovered that there is a connection between the rhythms of the various planets and the rhythms that regulate our life. 'They correspond', he once said, 'in the same way that the movements of a clockhand correspond to the course of the sun—though we could hardly say that the sun turned the wheels. The relations point to a common origin but neither is produced by the other.'[1] The establishment of exact relationships between the various rhythms showed the working of inner laws in nature, the knowledge of which was most important in agricultural work.

Steiner's instructions were not limited to plants alone. They dealt with animals, insects, minerals—in short, with all the organisms and their manifold interrelations with agriculture. His investigations even established clear connections between the various planets and the life and work within a beehive.

The practical results of only one aspect of the biological-dynamic method may be illustrated by another quotation from the article written in the *New Statesman and Nation:* 'At X., where there are a few fields, cultivated on the Steiner method,' the writer says, 'I have seen lately fruit and vegetables of outstanding quality, so excellent, indeed, that hard-headed shopkeepers in the nearest large town will pay more than the current market prices for them.'

Though Steiner gave his followers very exact instructions, he warned not to cling fanatically to these but to establish their truth by personal experience. No two moments in life are equal, he said, no two instances of it can be treated identically. The same freedom of action which he preached with regard to people, he also insisted upon when speaking of the earth, the plants or the animal kingdom.

VIII

Steiner's medical principles were presented to professional physicians in two courses of lectures in 1920 and 1921. Some of these discoveries were not entirely new—though they had been neglected for centuries. Steiner's aims in medicine were to restore

[1] *Paths of experience* (Lecture on the Moon), transl. by H. Collison, 1934.

'in a new form the old condition where the art of healing was bound up with the spiritual knowledge of man and the world'. 'In the mysteries,' Steiner said, referring to the ancient mysteries, 'these two were connected and this connection must be regained.'

The first practical and visible result of Steiner's lectures to doctors was the foundation by the Dutch woman doctor, Ita Wegman, of a clinical and therapeutical Institute at Arlesheim in Switzerland, which became the base for Steiner's further medical investigations. In later years clinics of a similar kind were founded in other countries.

One of Steiner's most important discoveries in the field of medicine was the acknowledgement of a threefold dynamic order in man. Man comprises for Steiner three different systems: a nervous system, which is the seat of consciousness and includes all nervous functions and all functions of sense; a metabolic system which includes a man's unconscious functions, such as digestion with its many processes resulting in the formation of blood; and a rhythmical system which functions between the two. The rhythmical system is centred in the heart and the blood, and expresses itself in breathing and in the circulation of the blood. The nervous system is the basis of our thought; the rhythmical of our feelings; and the metabolic of our will. The nervous system builds up our spiritual consciousness but destroys organic life. We see its example in the constant destruction by thought of the smallest entities in the brain, or in the using up of the retina in the eye through the process of seeing. The metabolic system builds up our unconscious faculties and our formative powers. Thus a living organism is for Steiner a current in which constant creation and constant destruction take place. These two forces produce a necessary balance, and that balance is responsible for all the rhythm in life.

Steiner's medical theories resulted in the establishment of what might be called a new medical science, new, that is, in the method of diagnosis, therapy and the production of medicines.

Steiner formulated exact methods of diagnosis, based on clairvoyant examination, but not limited merely to doctors with certain spiritual faculties, and open to any medical man. Steiner insisted that the examining doctor should consider the original mental and organic state of the patient, and should retrace in his diagnosis the course of the illness step by step. The process of healing, too, should be a backward reconstruction of the illness, till the original normal state is reached.

In his medical discoveries Steiner went one step further than Goethe's famous discovery of the formative powers in a plant,

known as the *Urpflanze*. Just as Goethe had found that the leaf holds the secret of the whole plant, Steiner recognized that in each individual part of the human organism the same formative life powers act that are responsible for the whole. Exactly as the seed contains already all the elements of the future tree, so does every individual organ disclose the dynamic faculties of the entire body.

Founding his medical discoveries on his truly cosmological knowledge, Steiner established the natural connections that exist between the various human organs and plants, animals and minerals. By doing this he indicated the way of anthroposophical therapy and of a new pharmaceutic science.

IX

The anthroposophical farmer had to abstain from using artificial manure; the anthroposophical doctor must have at his disposal entirely new medicaments. Man is an image of the macrocosm. Corresponding laws and powers act both in man and in nature. In order to make use of those laws in medicine they must be co-ordinated and their relationship must be established.

Anthroposophical doctors claim that they not only remove illness or pain but that they heal. Many of the pharmaceutical products as used nowadays do not heal the patient but merely kill the disease. Even among ordinary doctors it is admitted more and more that such remedies can leave within the body harmful effects that are bound to show themselves sooner or later. Though the actual illness has been destroyed, the foundations of a new one may have been laid.

In establishing the cosmological connections between the organs and functions of the human body and the corresponding minerals, plants and animals, anthroposophical pharmacy adopted a number of the herbs, plants and minerals, and even methods of healing, to which people resorted centuries ago. In anthroposophical pharmacy an attempt is made to produce the medicine in accordance with the processes in the human body for which the medicine will be used. A certain medicine will be manufactured at the exact temperature of the human blood, and others in the same rhythm which operates in the organs for which each of them is meant. Thus anthroposophical pharmacy acknowledges the direct relationship existing between the living forces in nature and the working of the human body. The manufacture of anthroposophical medicaments may be called a living process, that of ordinary medicaments a mechanical one.

Anthroposophical medical science claims to have discovered a number of remedies for various diseases that have hitherto seemed almost incurable. A number of ordinary doctors have accepted

anthroposophical remedies for malaria and consumption. Of other anthroposophical cures the most important are those for anaemia, seasickness and rheumatism. Rudolf Steiner's doctrine that man's mind cannot be ill because it is of a divine nature and that only the body in which the mind is placed can be responsible for the disease, produced new methods in the treatment of mental disturbances.

X

I had heard and read much of Steiner's educational system and was particularly anxious to see one of those establishments in which his combined educational and medical methods were practised. I am referring to that most difficult form known as the curative education of under-developed children. On account of paralysis, idiocy, epilepsy or some similar disease such children have to be specially treated. The main home for curative education in England was situated in a large park in Clent, not far from Birmingham, and was founded by an admirer of Steiner's methods. Several of the sixty or seventy children whom I saw had been pronounced incurable and had been at the home only a few months. They had so far recovered as to be singing songs round a Christmas tree; some of them were playing instruments and others were beginning to read and write or paint little pictures. Orthodox doctors considered the results achieved in this home as verging on the miraculous.

To carry out Steiner's educational principles the teacher must have considerable medical knowledge. Steiner bases his educational work on the conviction that at the ages of seven, fourteen and twenty-one fundamental changes take place in the human being. They are expressed by the cutting of the second teeth, puberty and the attainment of full growth.

Steiner established the theory of an inter-dependence of these turning points in the life of the child and its corresponding spiritual phases, and the growth and change in its physical organs. According to him, the whole life process in a child up to seven is occupied in building up the head and the nerve centres; after the second teeth it is occupied more with the chest system, the breathing and the circulation of the blood, and from the age of fourteen upwards it develops the child's metabolism. According to Steiner, 'until the change of teeth the human body has a task to perform upon itself which is essentially different from those set for other periods. . . . What has been neglected before the seventh year can never be made good.' Out of such considerations come instructions for the teacher. 'In this period,' Steiner says, 'moralizing and appeals are useless.

... Whatever goes on in the surroundings of the child will be imitated. ... The child is first wholly sense organ. Sense perceptions are closely bound to the child's emotions and will ... there is a unity of body, soul and spirit. That is why it is impossible for a child to keep still when it notices anything. It functions in all its faculties at every stimulation. The adult person transplants sense experiences first into thought and transforms them into knowledge; the child acts instantly.' For a child up to seven the example of the teacher is of paramount importance.

Steiner gave many interesting examples of the effect of a teacher upon the child. 'If the choleric temperament of the teacher', he once wrote, 'expresses itself too vehemently it gives the child a shock which can have results later. . . . It appears in the years from forty-five to fifty as digestive troubles. . . . Other temperaments in the teacher can be equally devastating in disorganizing the nervous system, creating illnesses of the breathing and blood circulation.'

Steiner showed with particular clearness the connection between faults of education and rheumatism in later life and declared that for a country to contain a large percentage of rheumatic people denotes faults in its educational system.

In Steiner's opinion, the child can be influenced from without only after the age of seven. It begins to dream vaguely and sees life as a sequence of pictures. Therefore emphasis should be laid on the use of pictures, images, fairy tales. Imagination should be guided. 'A child until the change of teeth', Steiner said, 'expresses its soul life most strongly through the movements of the limbs. Afterwards it lives more in the rhythm of its breathing and blood circulation. It instinctively responds to everything presented in rhyme, rhythm and measure.' This is where special emphasis is laid on eurhythmy.

Music, painting, drawing, modelling, woodwork are applied in anthroposophical education always in accordance with the particular stage of spiritual and physical development. Steiner showed what connections exist between the various forms of painting and the character of the child. 'Choleric children like vermilion and bright yellow and express their temperament happily and healthily if they are allowed to play about with these colours for a time', Steiner instructed anthroposophical teachers. 'Melancholic children love pale lilac and a rather deeper blue and grow more cheerful if they are allowed to express their more sober natures with these colours. The sanguine child's painting is characterized by the repetition, with rhythmic modifications, of some particular motive; while phlegmatic children express themselves in large patches of a single colour.

Painting also discovers morbid conditions, such as digestive disturbances. . . .'

The above example shows us a fraction of Steiner's educational theories. But there was nothing autocratic in his instructions to teachers: they were suggestions rather than strict rules, and the teacher had to modify them according to the individual case.

In 1919 the 'Waldorf School' in Stuttgart was inaugurated. It was the first practical example on a big scale of Steiner's educational ideas. In pre-Nazi days, with over a thousand pupils, it was the biggest school in Germany. It is interesting to read the description of some aspects of the school which was given by the Government official who was sent to inspect it on behalf of the Ministry of Education. 'I must put on record', says the official inspector, 'the fact that the college of teachers with its high moral standard and intellectual attainments gives the Waldorf School its peculiar quality. A staff of teachers in such a close bond of union, working in the same spirit and filled with the same warmth of enthusiasm, cannot but bring their feeling of unity to daily expression. . . . The literary scholars and humanists are introduced by the mathematicians and scientists to the domain of mathematics and science . . . and the humanists help the scientists. . . . The whole of the professional work of the teachers is filled with and upborne by the same spirit . . . such as could scarcely be found in the same degree in any other school in the land.'[1]

There were anthroposophical schools in seven other German towns[2]; also in Switzerland, Austria, Norway, Sweden, England and the United States. There were curative homes for children in a number of countries, and there were special classes for teachers and doctors at the Goetheanum at Dornach and in Arlesheim.

XI

In literature, in addition to writing his own mystery plays, Steiner influenced some authors of international renown. The best known among these were the leading Swiss poet Albert Steffen and Christian Morgenstern, one of the most revolutionary German poets of the period.

His political and economic principles had found their expression in his *Threefold Commonwealth*, mentioned in an earlier chapter.

[1] *The Free Waldorf School of Stuttgart*, by F. Hartlieb, 1928. (English translation, edited by H. Collison.)

[2] All these schools as well as other anthroposophical institutions were closed down by the Nazis.

XII

The variety of subjects described in this chapter represents only a part of the discoveries and principles left by Rodolf Steiner as his testament. It would need almost an Encyclopaedia to give a full picture of his work.

D. N. Dunlop, the founder and head of the World Power Conference, expressed the opinion of many people when he said that Rudolf Steiner's 'spiritual science embraces the whole wide sphere of the Heavens above and the Earth beneath'. He summed up Steiner's work in the following words: 'He has brought the knowledge of the spirit into practical application in the world of men in the spheres of philosophy, sociology, science, art, religion, medicine, education. . . . Rudolf Steiner's wisdom revered the traditions of the past, illuminated the problems of the present, pointed forward to the possibilities of the future.'

If Steiner had explained his occult perceptions in a way more acceptable to the physical sciences, the world at large might have followed him much more readily. Had his doctrine required less effort on the part of the individual, had it been presented in a less scientific form, many more people might have tried to adopt it.

Those who study Steiner seriously and dispassionately are not surprised that the acceptance of his ideas should be limited to a comparatively small group. For Steiner insisted over and over again that a movement like anthroposophy had to develop organically and slowly, and that it could not be forced in its growth. For Steiner, who believed with St John that 'a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven', knew that in forcing spirit we distort truth, and that this is a real offence against heaven.

CHAPTER XII

Krishnamurti in Carmel

I

I ANTICIPATED the change in none of the teachers I had been in touch with more keenly than the one that had taken place in Krishnamurti. I wrote to Eerde, in 1934, asking him when and where I could visit him. When his answer eventually arrived, I learned that he was just leaving New Zealand after a lecture tour in Australasia, that he was on his way to California, and that he would not be back in Europe for another eighteen months. In spite of the considerable expenditure of time and money, I decided to go all the way to the Pacific Coast, to Krishnamurti's Californian home at the Ojai Valley.

Krishnamurti was not the first Indian to exercise a spiritual influence over American thought through personal contact. Almost half a century before him young Vivekananda, the Indian teacher and disciple of Ramakrishna, had visited the United States; had impressed the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 more than anyone else, and had influenced William James, the great American philosopher. After the teachings of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, the message of Krishnamurti was transplanted to American soil at a time when spiritual truth, as perceived by the East, was no longer unknown to the American public.

II

I had informed Krishnamurti of the hour of my arrival, but at Hollywood's airport, Glendale, no one was awaiting me. When I telephoned I was told that Krishnamurti was not at Ojai but at Carmel, where he had been staying for the last few weeks. But I was assured that I would like Carmel, which was not very far from San Francisco.

I left Hollywood in the evening in pouring rain. I had to leave the train at Monterey, and I telephoned from the station to Krishnamurti to inform him of my arrival. Half an hour later a car pulled up in front of the station and Krishnamurti jumped out.

I had not seen him for a number of years. He was still slender and graceful, but his face had no longer its former boyish smoothness. Seven years earlier he had radiated nothing so strongly as beauty

and, though in his thirties, had looked a youth in his early twenties. Now the cheeks seemed hollower, under the eyes there were deep shadows, and silver threads ran through his thick black hair.

We drove out to Carmel, which was several miles away. It had stopped raining, and in the morning sun the plains were green and golden, and the hills and mountains purple and violet.

Since, in the little hotel in which Krishnamurti was staying, all the rooms were occupied, he took me to a larger one near by, situated among huge pines, on a hill overlooking the sea. After I had taken a look round my new home and expressed my delight with it, Krishnamurti said: 'I don't quite know what you want from me, or whether I'll be able to satisfy you. How do you propose to proceed?'

'Let us just be together as much as possible, if you can bear it', I answered. 'We will talk, and things will probably develop automatically. I came here to pick your brains and to ask you many indiscreet questions', I added.

Krishnamurti promised to visit me that afternoon, when we would go for a long walk and have our first conversation; in the evening we would dine together, and I would meet the people among whom he lived.

We were both very fond of walking, but heavy clouds gathered during the afternoon, and when Krishnamurti came to fetch me it rained so hard that we had to remain indoors. I was slightly nervous at the thought of our first conversation. The lack of common daily experiences tends to make such a conversation artificial.

In several books and articles attacks had been launched against Krishnamurti, and, so far as I was aware, he had never answered them. There was, for example, the question of his attitude with regard to the claims of a second Christ made on his behalf; again there was the question of his finances and of his private life. I considered that our conversation could serve no useful purpose while there remained a doubt in my mind as to Krishnamurti's absolute honesty of purpose.

I said, without looking him straight in the face: 'I am afraid my first question will seem tactless to you. But I have not come all this way for the sake of a polite conversation with you or abstract philosophical discussions. I want to be able to tell my readers that I believed what you have told me, and therefore the first thing I ask of you is absolute frankness. Otherwise I shall feel that my whole journey out here will have been in vain. I may perhaps formulate my request by quoting the relevant passage from a biography of Mrs Besant by Theodore Besterman. This is what the author has to say about you: "Mr Krishnamurti is now in a position in which he is

able to do much good; the message he is bringing to the world is one which is badly needed; if he can succeed in inducing a large and influential number of people to adopt these views and to act on them, the benefit conferred on the world would be incalculable. But Mr Krishnamurti must realize that, as an advocate of truth in the largest sense, he must himself act the Truth. He has been very frank, but he must be franker still. Up to 1929 Mr Krishnamurti's life was entangled in a complex network of far-reaching claims. Mr Krishnamurti must tell us the truth about these things, however painful it will necessarily be to discuss his past friends in public." '

Krishnamurti took my hand with an almost passionate gesture, and said: 'Now listen. No apologies are necessary. You can ask me anything you want, the most tactless, the most intimate questions. There is no privacy in my life, and everyone may hear any detail that may interest him. Let us put our whole relationship on that basis, and it will save us a lot of unnecessary trouble. Ask anything you want—go ahead.'

I decided to begin with a point, the best formulation of which I found in the same book by Mr Besterman. It dealt with Krishnamurti's authorship of a short mystical book, which he was supposed to have written as a little boy, but under the direct guidance of the 'master' preparing him for an 'initiation'. I went on: 'This is what Besterman says about one of your earliest "crimes": ". . . he must tell us the truth about the authorship of such books as *At the feet of the master*, which appear under his name. . . . I must say in the plainest terms that so long as Mr Krishnamurti does not speak to us frankly about these years before 1929 he will never obtain the ear of intelligent and educated people . . ." '

Krishnamurti became pensive for a second, and then he said: 'People have asked me that question before. Some of them were satisfied with my answer, others weren't. For anyone who does not know me well it may be difficult at first to accept my answer. I am bound to say a few words about myself before I can answer your question. You must have noticed that I have got an extremely bad memory for what one may call physical realities. When you arrived this morning I could not remember whether we had met two, three or ten years ago. Neither can I remember where and how we met. People used to call me a dreamer and they accused me, quite rightly, of being desperately vague. I was hopeless at school in India. Teachers or friends would talk to me, I would listen to them, and yet I wouldn't have the faintest notion what they were talking about. I don't recollect whether I used to think about anything in particular at such moments, and if so, what about. I must just have been dreaming,

since facts failed to impress themselves upon my memory. I remember vaguely having written something when I was a boy educated by Bishop Leadbeater, but I haven't the slightest recollection whether I wrote a whole book or only a few pages. I don't know what Leadbeater did with the pages I wrote, whether he corrected them or not, whether they were kept or destroyed. I don't know whether I wrote of my own accord or whether I was influenced by some power outside myself. I wish I knew. I don't claim to be a writer, but it seems to me that no one can ever say whether a writer is directed by a power outside or just by his own brain and his own emotions. I would very much like to know the hidden subtleties of that complicated process which is called writing. I, too, would like to know the facts about the writing of the book *At the feet of the master*. I can still see myself sitting at a table and writing something that did not come at all easily to me. It must be some twenty-five years ago.'

'How old are you now?'

'I can't tell. In India, age matters less than in the West, and records of age are not kept. According to my passport, I was born in 1897. But I can't vouch for the accuracy of this.'

The atmosphere seemed by now intimate enough for what I considered the most difficult question to put to him. I personally attached little importance to it, but I knew that people interested in Krishnamurti were always discussing it. 'Many people are sceptical', I said, 'with regard to you because you have never denied the claims made on your behalf. You have never got up and said clearly: "All this talk about my being the World Teacher is bunkum, I deny the truth of it." '

'I never either denied or affirmed that I was Christ or anybody else', Krishnamurti replied. 'Such attributions are utterly meaningless to me.'

'But not to the people who come to listen to you', I interrupted.

'Had I said yes, they would have wanted me to perform miracles, walk on water or awaken the dead. Had I said no, I am not Christ, they would have taken this as an authoritative statement and acted accordingly. I am, however, against all authority in spiritual matters, against all standards created by one person for the sake of others. I could not possibly say either yes or no. You will probably understand this better after you have been with me for a few days, and after we have had several talks. Today I can only say that I consider my own person of no special importance, Christ or no Christ. What matters is whether what I say can help people or not. Any confirmation or denial on my part would only evoke corresponding expectations on the part of the people. When I visit India

people ask me: "Why do you wear European clothes and eat every day? You cannot be a true teacher. If you were one, you would be fasting and walking about in a loincloth." My answer to this can only be that everyone teaches what it is his particular duty to teach, and that everyone has to lead his own life. It does not follow that because Gandhi wears only a loincloth and Christ walked on the water, I must do likewise. The labels for my personality are irrelevant. But there was another reason as well for never denying clearly the claims made on my behalf. It was regard for Dr Besant. Had I said that I was not the World Teacher, people would have cried, "Mrs Besant is a liar!" My categorical denial would have harmed and hurt her. By saying nothing I did spare her without harming anyone else.'

'Why did you go on lecturing even after renouncing your organization?'

Krishnamurti seemed surprised. 'I never thought of that,' he said after a short pause: 'I went on lecturing out of habit, I suppose. I was made to do it since my boyhood; it became a sort of tradition with me, and I just went on doing it. I suppose I was never quite conscious in those days of what I was doing. It is only in the last few years that I have become fully aware of my daily actions and that I no longer act as though walking in a dream.'

'I believe you, Krishnaji, but do you think my readers will?'

'I can help neither you nor them if they won't. I am not hiding anything from you, I am telling you the whole truth. I presume that people with a strongly developed sense of facts and a good memory must find me exasperating. But I cannot help that.'

I had never spoken to Krishnamurti since he had given up his huge organization, and I was anxious to know more about that momentous decision. Then we should be able to turn to more important matters.

'When did you decide to give up the organization that had been built up for you, and to renounce all your earthly possessions? And why really did you do it?' I asked. 'Was it in 1929 that you spoke about it for the first time?'

'No, a year or two before. But I did not feel clearly about it till 1929. I talked to Rajagopal[1] about it; we had long discussions, and eventually I spoke to Dr Besant about my decision. She only said: "For me you are the Teacher, no matter what you decide to do. I cannot understand your decision, but I shall have to respect it." For a certain time she appeared to be rather shaken, but she was a splendid woman and at last she seemed to agree with what I was

[1] Krishnamurti's best friend and late executive head of The Order of the Star.

doing. I gave up my organization because I came to realize beyond all doubt that anything of that sort must be hindering if you want to find truth. Churches, dogmas, ceremonies are nothing but stumbling blocks on the road to truth.'

'But you go on lecturing even today, don't you?'

'Indeed I do. I feel more than ever that I can help people. Of course I cannot give them happiness or truth. No one can. But I can help them to discern a way of approaching truth. Last year I went to Australia, and at times I had to speak to ten thousand people. In a few months time I shall probably go on a lecture tour to most of the South American countries.'

I had intended to question Krishnamurti about his financial situation and the moment seemed particularly appropriate. 'Do you make much money during those tours?'

'None at all,' Krishnamurti answered, 'though they pay my expenses.'

'There are so many stories regarding your financial situation,' I said, 'that it would make it easier for me if you could enlighten me about it. Some people accuse you of having accepted large fortunes left to you by a number of very rich people in England and America —it is said, in short, that you are practically a millionaire.'

Krishnamurti laughed. 'Do you know what I possess? A couple of suits, a few books, a few personal belongings—and no money. There are a few kind friends who help to keep me alive. They ask me to stay with them; they pay my modest expenses when I travel. Take Carmel for example: I stay at my hotel as the guest of an old friend who has got a house in the neighbourhood and who knows that I love working here. If I had money I should give it away as I did once before. My needs are so small that what I receive is ample. If no one gave me anything I should just work for my living.'

'I am glad we have cleared up that point', I said; 'from now on I need no longer feel like counsel for the prosecution, and we can spend our time on things that really matter.'

'Then let's start straight away and go and have some dinner', Krishnamurti exclaimed, getting up. 'We dine early here, not like you in England. I generally go to bed soon after nine, and get up in the morning before six.'

It was quite dark outside, and we drove slowly to Krishnamurti's hotel. The road took us higher and higher over cliffs and through pine woods, while from deep below came the thunder of waves breaking against the rocks. The road was narrow and steep, and there were many sharp corners. On one side there seemed to be a deep precipice. 'I don't drive very much these days', Krishnamurti

said as his hand lay rather vaguely on the steering wheel; and he added with a chuckle: 'I hope you insured your life before you left England.'

III

The weather was glorious next morning, and I went to fetch Krishnamurti for a walk. We had not gone very far when we reached a clearing among the huge pine trees high up on the hills, with an endless view over the picturesque coastline. We decided that it would be easier to talk sitting down. Krishnamurti sat down on the heather-covered ground in Eastern fashion with crossed legs. I had already worked out a plan which would enable us to talk every day about certain definite subjects, hoping that this would help us not to lose ourselves and that it would introduce a certain structure into our talks.

'What is your message today?' I began.

Krishnamurti's answer came in a very definite tone: 'I have no message. If I had one, most people would accept it blindly and try to live up to it, merely because of the authority which they try to force upon me.'

'But what do you tell people when they come and ask you to help them?'

'Most people come and ask me whether they can learn through experience.'

'And your answer is?'

'That they cannot.'

'No?'

'Of course not. You cannot learn spiritual truth through experience. Don't you see? Let us assume that you had a deep sorrow and you learned how to fight against it. This experience will induce you to apply the same method of overcoming grief during your next sorrow.'

'That does not seem wrong to me.'

'But it is wrong. Instead of doing something vital, you try to adapt a dead method to life. Your former experience has become a prescription, a medicine. But life is too complicated, too subtle for that. It never repeats itself; no two sorrows in your life are alike. Each new sorrow or joy must be dealt with in the fashion that the uniqueness of the experience requires.'

'How can that be done?'

'By eliminating the memory of former experiences; by destroying all recollections of our actions and reactions.'

'What remains after we have destroyed them all?'

'An inner preparedness that brings you nearer truth. You never ought to act according to old habits but in the way life wants you to act—spontaneously, on the spur of the moment.'

'Does this apply to everything in life?'

'It does. You must try to eliminate from your life all old habits and systems of behaviour, because no two moments in life are exactly similar.'

'But all this is only negative, and I don't find anything positive at all in your scheme of things.'

Krishnamurti smiled and moved nearer to me: 'You don't need to search for the positive; don't force it. It is always there, though hidden behind a huge heap of old experiences. Eliminate all of them, and truth—or what you call the positive—will be there. It comes up automatically. You cannot help it.'

I pondered over his words for a while, then I said: 'You have just used the word "truth". What *is* truth, according to you?'

'Call it truth or liberation or even God. It is all the same. Truth is for me the release of the mind from all burdens of memory.' This definition was new to me, but before I could say a word Krishnamurti went on: 'Truth is awareness, constant awareness of life within and without you. Do you follow?' His voice became almost insistent.

'I do, but please explain to me what you mean by "awareness",' I replied.

Krishnamurti came even closer to me, and his voice became even more persuasive. 'What matters is that we should live completely at every moment of our lives. That is the only real liberation. Truth is nothing abstract, it is neither philosophy, occultism nor mysticism. It is everyday life, it is perceiving the meaning and wisdom of life around us. The only life worth dealing with is our present life and every one of its moments. But to understand it we must liberate our mind from all memories, and allow it to appreciate spontaneously the present moment.'

'I take it that by spontaneous appreciation you mean an appreciation dictated solely by the circumstances of that very moment?'

'Exactly—there can be no other spontaneity of life; and that is precisely what I call real awareness. Do you understand?'

'I do, but I doubt whether such awareness can really be expressed in words. . . . I think it can only be understood if we actually experience it ourselves. No description can possibly do it justice.'

Krishnamurti did not answer immediately. He was lying on the ground, facing the sky. 'It is so,' he said slowly; 'but what is one to do?'

'What indeed, Krishnaji? I wondered what you really meant when you told me yesterday that you tried to help people by talking to them. Can anyone who has not himself gone through that state of awareness of which you speak comprehend what it means? Those who possess it do not need to hear about it.'

Krishnamurti paused again, and I could see that he was affected by the turn our conversation had taken. He said after a while: 'And yet this is the only way one can help people. I think that one clarifies people's minds by discussing these things with them. Eventually they will perceive truth for themselves. Don't you agree?'

I knew that Krishnamurti disliked all questions that seemed to arise out of mere curiosity or to depend upon abstract speculation, but I nevertheless asked, 'Don't you think that the limits of time and space must cease to exist once we establish within ourselves a constant awareness of life?'

'Of course they must. The past is only a result of memories. It is dead stuff. Once we cease to carry about with us this ballast there will be no time limits with regard to the past. The same is true in a slightly different way with regard to the future. But all this talk about seeing into the future or the past is only a result of purely intellectual curiosity. At every lecture I give half a dozen people always ask me about their future and past incarnations. As though it mattered what they were or what they will be. All that is real is the present. Whether we can look into the tomorrow or across continents is meaningless from a spiritual point of view.'

'Don't you think that conscious perception through time and space can be very valuable? Don't you think that the results obtained by Rudolf Steiner's occult perceptions are really helpful to humanity?'

'I have never studied Steiner, and I wish you would tell me more about him. All I know about Steiner comes from Dr Besant's occasional remarks. I think she had a great admiration for Steiner's unusual gifts, and was sorry that their relationship had to be broken, but I never studied him properly. As for occult perceptions, for me they are not particularly spiritual: they are merely a certain method of investigation. That's all. They might be spiritual at times, but they are not always or necessarily so.'

'You have never read any of Steiner's books?'

'No, nor have I ever read any of the other philosophers. . . .'

'But Steiner was not a philosopher', I interrupted.

'Yes, I know. I only meant writers of a philosophical or similar kind. I cannot read them. I am sorry, but I just can't. Living and reacting to life is what I am interested in. All theory is abhorrent to me.'

Although noon was at hand and it was growing very hot, Krishnamurti suggested a walk towards the sea. 'Are you writing anything at present?' I asked him when we reached the road going down to the sea.

'Yes, I am preparing a book. But it is nothing consecutive—just a book of thoughts.'

'What about your poetry?'

'I feel poetry, but somehow I cannot write it at present.'

'What books do you read? I remember that at one time you used to read a great deal, and that you liked choosing your friends especially from among artists and writers.'

'What books does one read?' Krishnamurti answered, slightly embarrassed.

Questions about his personal habits always seemed to make him uncomfortable. I noticed this repeatedly during my stay at Carmel. Though he derived every detail of his teaching from personal experiences, and preferred talking about it in a personal way, it seemed to me that he withdrew himself, as it were, whenever I put questions that were not connected directly with his mission in life or that dealt with such matters as his personal tastes and habits. Discussion for the satisfaction of intellectual curiosity obviously caused him discomfort. This was not a result, I believe, of what is usually called natural modesty. It was rather as though he tried to remain perpetually on a plane of inner awareness, and felt uneasy whenever he had to switch over to a plane of intellectual discussion. But he loved ordinary conversation about topical subjects, politics, music, the theatre or travel. It was only when the outside world was brought into direct intellectual relationship with his personality that he shrank away from such interrogation.

'I am not a specialist of any kind', said Krishnamurti, in answer to my original question. 'I read everything that seems interesting—Huxley, Lawrence, Joyce, André Gide. . . .'

'Did you really mean what you said when you told me that you never read philosophy?'

'Goodness me, yes! What should I read philosophy for?'

'Perhaps to learn from it.'

'Do you seriously think you can learn from books? You can accumulate knowledge, you can learn facts and technicalities, but you cannot learn truth, happiness, or any of the things that really matter. You can read for your entertainment, for thousands of other reasons, but not to learn the essential things. You can only learn from living and acknowledging the life that is your very own. But not from the lives of others.'

'Does that mean that in your opinion nothing can ever be learned from books, from the experience of others?'

'I shall refrain from saying definitely yes, though I feel inclined to do so. The knowledge of others only builds up barriers within ourselves, barriers that stand in the way of an impulsive reaction to life. Of course it is easier to go through life learning from the experience of others, leaning on Aristotle, on Kant, on Bergson or on Freud; but that is not living your life, facing reality. It is merely evading reality by hiding behind a screen created by someone else.'

'Do you consider this to be true of religion also?'

'I do. Religions offer people authority in place of truth; they give them crutches instead of making their legs strong; they give them drugs instead of urging them to push out along their own paths in search of truth for themselves. I fear none of the churches today has very much to do with truth.'

'Do many, among the thousands who come to listen to you, ask you questions about religious matters?'

'Most of them do. There are three questions that crop up over and over again, and no meeting is complete without them, whether I speak in India, in Australia, in Europe or in California. I deduce from their popularity that they must deal with the three most urgent spiritual problems of modern man. They are questions about the values of experience, of prayer and of religion in general.'

Krishnamurti had already given me his opinions of experience and religion, so I only asked: 'What is your attitude towards prayer?'

'Prayer in which you ask God for something is in my opinion utterly wrong.'

'Even if you ask God for help to achieve the awareness you were talking about?'

'Even then. How can anything be spiritual—and prayer, I take it, is supposed to be something spiritual—that asks for a reward? This is not spirituality but economics, or whatever else you like to call it. In spiritual truth things just are; but there can be no requests, promises or rewards. Things happen in life because they simply have to happen. A reward can never be anything else but fixed, stationary, if you understand what I mean. Spiritual life, true life, must be always moving—fluctuating, alive.'

'But cannot prayer be just a bridge along which we move towards the inner awareness?'

'It can, but that is not what people generally understand by prayer. What you now mean is simply a state of real living, of inner expectation. This identifies us with truth. Do you see the difference?'

'I do, and I therefore presume that you deny all "crystallized"

forms invented by man for the attainment of truth, such as meditation, yoga or other methods of mental exercise.'

'Yes, it is so. How can you expect to achieve something which is constantly fluctuating through a method that, in your own words, is crystallized—or in my words, dead? People often come to me and ask me about the value of meditation. All I can tell them is that I see no reason why they should meditate on one particular subject, instead of meditating on everything that enters their life, because it seems to me that deliberate concentration on one particular thought, eliminating all others, must create an inner conflict. I consider it wiser to meditate on whatever happens to enter your mind: whether it be about what you will do this afternoon or as to which suit you will put on. Such thoughts are as important—if attended to with your full inner awareness—as any philosophy. It is not the subject of your thought that matters so much as the quality of your thinking. Try to complete a thought instead of banishing it, and your mind will become a wonderful creative instrument instead of being a battlefield of competing thoughts. Your meditation will then develop into a constant alertness of mind. This is what I understand by meditation.'

I remembered Keyserling's answer to my question on meditation, and was struck by the similarity of the views held by these two so different men. 'Keyserling', I said, 'quite recently told me something of much the same sort. He said that for him meditation was nothing else but facing reality as it came along.'

'I agree with him in that respect. You can find truth only by your own constant awareness of life. You must not try to live up to somebody else's standards, because inevitably those of two different men can never be really identical.'

'Does this mean that you believe in the absolute equality of men?'

'Of course I do, though not in the way Communism understands it. Because I preach equality of races, religions and castes, Communists think that I preach Communism. American Communists often come to visit me at Ojai and say: "We believe in you because you preach the things that we do. But why don't you join our party?" They don't understand that I am not only unable to join their party, or any other party, but that I cannot possibly agree with their methods. You can achieve equality among men only by greater knowledge, by deeper understanding, by better education, by making people grasp what life means. How can you do this if the leaders themselves don't know, if they themselves behave like automata and preach their particular gospels not from an inner awareness of life and its necessities—which means according to real truth—but

by repeating over and over and over again certain formulae invented by others. You cannot achieve equality by taking their possessions away from people. What you must take away from them is their instinct of possessiveness. This does not apply only to land and money, a factory or a sable coat. It also applies to a book, to a flower, to your wife, your lover or your child. I don't mean to say that you must not have or enjoy any of these things. Of course you must! But you must enjoy them for the sake of the joy they transmit, and not for the feeling of pleasure that their possession gives you. This fundamental attitude has to be changed before anything else can be done. Nothing can be altered by taking things away from the rich and giving them to the poor, thus developing their feeling of greed and possessiveness.'

IV

When we met again we no longer pretended that we were going for a walk but went straight to our pine-shadowed resort on the hill. It was an ideal place for conversation—not a single human being passed it all through the day and the view was exalting. The only noise was that of the sea breaking on the cliffs. I no longer felt intimidated by the subjects on which I had considered it my duty to question Krishnamurti; I knew that I could speak freely about everything; and I felt that the moment had arrived when I could question him about sex.

Life in England had taught me to treat sex in the way one treats poorer relations or Victorian society treated women's legs: pretending that they do not exist and never mentioning them. Such an attitude may provide a temporary solution, and it is probably of practical value in all the more conventional circumstances of life. But it does not solve the essential problem. It brings no happiness, nor does it release any of those forces that sex, properly and honestly expressed, ought to create. Make-believe in matters of sex may be laudable in the face of certain necessarily superficial aspects of the life of a community; but it can never be more than merely a means of escape—it shirks facing reality. For people who find sexual satisfaction in perfect love the sex problem does not exist—but such people are few. The majority are not capable of regulating their sex impulses in a satisfactory way.

I asked Krishnamurti whether he thought it wrong for people with a very strong sexual impulse to give way to it. 'Nothing is wrong if it is the result of something that is really within you', was his answer. 'Follow your urge, if it is not created by artificial stimuli but is burning within you—and there will be no sex problem in your life. A

problem only arises when something within us that is real is opposed by intellectual considerations.'

'But surely it is not only intellectual considerations that cause many people to believe the satisfaction of a strong sex urge to be wrong, even if it is too strong to be suppressed.'

'Suppression can never solve a problem. Nor can self-discipline do it. That is only substituting one problem for another.'

'But how do you expect millions of people, who have become slaves of sex, to solve the friction between their urge and that judicial sense which tries to prevent them from giving way? In England you may find fewer people dominated by sex, but consider America; consider most of the countries of the continent of Europe; consider many of the Eastern nations—for them their sex needs are a grave problem.'

I noticed an expression of slight impatience on Krishnamurti's face. 'For me this problem does not exist', he said; 'after all, sex is an expression of love, isn't it? I personally derive as much joy from touching the hand of a person I am fond of as another might get from sexual intercourse.'

'But what about the ordinary person who has not attained to your state of maturity, or whatever it should be called?'

'To begin with, people ought to see sex in its proper proportions. It is not sex as a vital inner urge that dominates people nowadays so much as the images and thoughts of sex. Our whole modern life is propitious to them. Look around you. You can hardly open a newspaper, travel by the underground or walk along a street without coming across advertisements and posters that appeal to your sex instincts in order to sing the praises of a pair of stockings, a new toothpaste or a particular brand of cigarettes. I cannot imagine that so many semi-naked girls have ever before walked through the pages of newspapers and magazines. In every shop, cinema and café the lift attendants, waitresses and shopgirls are made up to look like harlots so that they may appeal to your sex instincts. They themselves are not conscious of this, but their short skirts, their exposed legs, their painted faces, their girlish coiffures, the constant physical appeal which they are made to exercise over the customer do nothing but stimulate your sex instincts. Oh, it is beastly, simply beastly! Sex has been degraded to become the servant of unimaginative salesmanship. Someone will start a new magazine and, instead of racking his brains for an interesting and alluring title-page, all he does is to publish a coloured picture of a girl with half-opened lips, suggestively hiding her breasts and looking altogether like a whore. You are being constantly attacked, and you no longer know whether it is

your own sex urge or the sex vibration produced artificially by life around you. This degrading, emphatic appeal to our sex instinct is one of the most beastly signs of our civilization. Take it away, and most of the so-called sex urge is gone.'

'I am not a moralist,' Krishnamurti added after a pause; 'I have nothing against sex, and I am against sex suppression, sex hypocrisy and even what is called sexual self-discipline, which is only a specific form of hypocrisy. But I don't want sex to be cheapened, to be introduced into all those forms of life where it does not belong.'

'Nevertheless, Krishnaji, your world without its beastly sex appeal will be found only in Utopia. We are dealing with the world as it actually is, and as it will probably be in days to come, long after you and I are gone.'

'That may be so, but it does not concern me. I am not a doctor; I cannot prescribe half-remedies; I deal simply and solely with fundamental spiritual truth. If you are in search of remedies and half-methods you must go to a psychologist. I can only repeat that if you readjust yourself in such a way as to allow love to become an omnipresent feeling in which sex will be an expression of genuine affection, all the wretched sex problems will cease to exist.'

He looked up for a few seconds and then gave a deep sigh. 'Oh, if you people could only see that these problems don't exist in reality, and that it is only yourselves who create them, and that it is yourselves who must solve them! I cannot do it for you—nobody can if he is faithful to truth. I can only deal with spiritual truth and not with spiritual quackery.' His voice seemed full of disillusion and he stopped and lay back on the ground.

I began to understand what Christ must have meant when He spoke of His love without distinction for every human being, and of all men being brothers. Indeed, the omnipresent feeling of love (in which sex would become meaningless without being eliminated) seemed the only form of love worthy of a conscious and mature human being. Nevertheless I wondered whether Krishnamurti himself had reached that stage of life-awareness in which personal love had given place to universal love, in which every human being would be approached with equal affection.

'Don't you love some people more than others?' I asked. 'After all, even a person like yourself is bound to have emotional preferences.'

Krishnamurti's voice was very quiet when he began to speak again. 'I must first say something before I can give you a satisfactory reply to your question. Otherwise you may not be able to accept it in the spirit in which it is offered. I want you to know that these talks are

quite as important to me as they can possibly be to you. I don't speak to you merely to satisfy the curiosity of an author who happens to be writing about me, or to help you personally. I talk mainly to clarify a number of things for myself. This I consider one of the great values of conversation. You must not think therefore that I ever say anything unless I believe it with my whole heart. I am not trying to impress, to convince or to teach you. Even if you were my oldest friend or my brother I should speak in just the same way. I am saying all this because I want you to accept my words as simple statements of opinion and not as attempts to convert or persuade. You asked me just now about personal love, and my answer is that I no longer know it. Personal love does not exist for me. Love is for me a constant inner state. It does not matter to me whether I am now with you, with my brother or with an utter stranger—I have the same feeling of affection for all and each of you. People sometimes think that I am superficial and cold, that my love is negative and that it is not strong enough to be directed to one person only. But it is not indifference, it is merely a feeling of love that is constantly within me and that I simply cannot help giving to everyone I come into touch with.' He paused for a second as though wondering whether I believed him, and then said: 'People were shocked by my recent behaviour after Mrs Besant's death, I did not cry, I did not seem distressed but was serene; I went on with my ordinary life, and people said that I was devoid of all human feeling. How could I explain to them that, as my love went to everyone, it could not be affected by the departure of one individual, even if this was Mrs Besant. Grief can no longer take possession of you when love has become the basis of your entire being.'

'There must be people in your life who mean nothing to you or whom you even dislike?'

Krishnamurti smiled: 'There aren't any people I dislike. Don't you see that it is not I who directs my love towards one person, strengthening it here, weakening it there? Love is simply there like the colour of my skin, the sound of my voice, no matter what I do. And therefore it is bound to be there even when I am surrounded by people I don't know or people whom I "should" not care for. Sometimes I am forced to be in a crowd of noisy people that I don't know; it may be some meeting or a lecture or perhaps a waiting room in a station, where the atmosphere is full of noise, smoke, the smell of tobacco and all the other things that affect me physically. Even then my feeling of love for everyone is as strong as it is under this sky and on this lovely spot. People think that I am conceited or a hypocrite when I tell them that grief and sorrow and even death do not affect

me. It is not conceit. Love that makes me like that is so natural to me that I am always surprised that people can question it. And I feel this unity not only with human beings. I feel it with trees, with the sea, with the whole world around me. Physical differentiations no longer exist. I am not speaking of the mental images of a poet; I am speaking of reality.'

When Krishnamurti stopped his eyes were shining, and there was in him that specific quality of beauty which easily appears sentimental when described in words, and yet is so convincing when met with in real life. It did not seem magnetism that radiated from him but rather an inner illumination that is hard to define, and that manifests itself as sheer beauty. I now experienced the feeling we sometimes have when confronted by strong impressions of nature. Reaching the top of a mountain, or the soft breezes of early spring, with the promise of daffodils and leafy woods, can produce such states of unsophisticated contentment.

Krishnamurti had told me a lot during the few hours on the hill, and on our walk home I felt that I must first digest it all, and that it would be wiser to remain by myself for the rest of the day.

I read during the afternoon the pamphlets that Krishnamurti had given me, which contained his recent lectures at Ojai and in Australia. Though I recognized in these many of his fundamental beliefs, I was struck again by his insistence that it is essential to eliminate the ego, in order to see truth. 'Happiness, or truth or God cannot be found as the outcome of the ego. The ego is to me nothing but the result of environment.' I wondered whether people at large could grasp this idea. Weren't they always taught that they have to develop their ego, their personality, before they can hope to achieve anything important in life? Would it not be wiser if Krishnamurti proceeded step by step, teaching that inner awareness could be found only gradually and after long and slow preparation?

That was my first question when we settled down next morning under the pines overlooking the ocean. 'Mrs Besant once said to me,' Krishnamurti answered, ' "I am nothing but a nurse who helps people who are unable to move by themselves and who are in need of crutches. This I consider to be my duty. You, Krishnaji, appeal to people who do not need crutches, who can walk on their own feet. Go on talking to them, but please let me speak to those who need help. Don't tell them that all crutches are wrong, because some people cannot live without them. Please, do not tell them to refuse to follow anyone on whom they can lean." '

'What was your answer?' I interrupted. 'I think Mrs Besant's request was very fair.'

'I said to her: "I cannot possibly do what you are asking me. I consider that any definite method or advice is a crutch, and thus a barrier to truth. I simply must go on denying all crutches—even yours." Do not blame me for having been so cruel to a woman of eighty, to whom I seem to have meant a great deal and whom I always loved and admired.'

'I see your point, Krishnaji; nevertheless I question its wisdom,' I said. 'The majority of people are neither independent nor conscious of themselves—that's why they need help. Your attitude might be considered cruel. Your duty is, I take it, to help people and to help as many as you can. Doesn't that mean that you have to consider the overwhelming majority of people?'

'I cannot possibly make distinctions between a majority and a minority; for it is wrong to assume that there is one truth for the masses and another for the elect. All people are spiritually equal.'

'But wouldn't you consider it wiser to prepare people slowly for a truth that requires such a thorough inner readjustment? Only a few people are ripe for the necessary inner revolution.'

'These few matter. Those who genuinely search for truth, who study it from every angle, who test it and open themselves to it, will find it easy to live in constant inner awareness. Preparing people for it would mean compromising. And a compromise is a bargain between truth and untruth. How can you expect me to preach untruth—no matter in what form—after having found truth? I am not a quack. I am only concerned with spiritual truth.'

'So what should the people do who cannot walk through life without crutches?'

'Let them go on using them—but I shall have nothing to do with them. People who need a sanatorium must not come to me.' Krishnamurti came nearer to me and took my hand, as he would sometimes do when in despair at my inability to see his point; and then he said: 'You must understand that I can only talk to people who are willing to revolutionize themselves in order to find truth. You cannot find truth by living on a special emotional diet or by using an elaborate system of mental exercises.'

I began to see that no compromise was possible and that Krishnamurti could only offer truth with all its revolutionary consequences or else no truth at all. In spite of this I said: 'I think you are right; but yet I ask myself, How can truth, as conceived by you, be communicated to the masses?'

An expression of sadness came into Krishnamurti's face and he

spoke slowly, as though talking to himself: 'I, too, often ask myself, How? When I speak in India more than ten thousand people will come to a meeting to listen to me. Thousands come to listen to me in America—thousands in Europe—thousands in Australia.[1] I know that most of them come simply out of curiosity or for fun, and only a few because they are trying to find something which they haven't found elsewhere. How many of them return home happier or richer? . . . And yet I know that I must go on. One can help people only by talking to them, by discussing truth with them.' He stopped for a moment and then turned towards me: 'As you know, I abhor the whole idea of discipleship and all the futility of a so-called spiritual organization; yet at times I wonder whether I shouldn't prepare a few helpers who might be able to enlighten those people who won't listen to me because of my former notoriety as "the messiah". They might listen to my "pupils" who have no past to live down. I must confess that it makes me sad that I cannot help as many people as I should like to.'

We got up, and Krishnamurti insisted upon accompanying me halfway towards my hotel. The sea was stretched at the bottom of the steep road, on one side of which was a private garden full of red, blue and yellow flowers and mimosa trees covered with thick clusters of golden blossoms. Beyond the garden hills rose swiftly towards the sky. Though the sun was shining, a faint haze lingered over the sea. November was approaching, but the light, the heat and the vegetation suggested July. When we reached the bottom of the road we separated, and I walked on by myself along the coast, Krishnamurti turning back up the hill. I looked round after a minute and saw him walking very slowly, his head hanging down and his narrow shoulders drooping. I felt like running back and saying something to him—but I did nothing.

VI

What effect had Krishnamurti's message on those who had had no proper preparation for it or no chance of daily conversation with him? Now the moment had arrived to learn something about the reactions of such people, and Carmel seemed particularly propitious for this task. There were at Carmel not only those who would react to Krishnamurti's message in the usual, that is to say, emotional rather than critical way, but also people with pronounced capacities for the

[1] In the summer of 1935 I received a letter from Krishnamurti, from Rio de Janeiro, in which he wrote: 'I gave here two meetings in a football stadium, as there was no theatre large enough to hold the crowd.' Each time twenty thousand people attended his meeting.

understanding and criticism of it. Carmel was not what might be called a 'colony'. It was not the Capri of English novelists and Russian religious 'maniacs'; it was not the defenceless Positano upon which descended soon after the war hordes of German and American painters; it was not the Swiss Ascona in which Germanic dreamers were following many and varied gods; it was not even one of those fishing villages along the Mediterranean coast which, discovered by a fashionable Anglo-American dramatist or novelist, were turned overnight into a centre of international frivolity. Carmel was one of the faintly baroque survivals of California's Spanish past. An antique church stood outside the miniature town with its main street called Ocean Avenue, and there were shops in one-storey houses, faintly reminiscent of colonial architecture. There was even an art gallery, run by a few ladies and dedicated fearlessly both to music and to pictorial art. Once a month the art gallery would be transformed into a concert hall, and musicians from all over the world, in need of a short rest during their American tour, would stop in Carmel for a couple of days on their journey between San Francisco and Los Angeles, and give a recital in the white exhibition room with its modern pictures and its host of eager listeners. The residential houses lay in the midst of little gardens, adorned by hibiscus and fuchsias. One or two houses were built on some romantic promontory, overhanging the sea and commanding a limitless view of sky and coastline.

Though Carmel had become the home of many creative personalities, its life had not been deadened by an intellectual or artistic unity of purpose. Yet the presence of Krishnamurti seemed to be producing a certain common link, and to have focused the attention of the inhabitants of Carmel and of the neighbouring Dal Monte, Monterey and Pebble Beach. I was assured that even in the shops in Ocean Avenue people talked much less of the latest Hollywood scandals than of Krishnamurti.

Many of the inhabitants have approached Krishnamurti directly —some no doubt to satisfy a curiosity awakened by his former notoriety, a few out of a religious need, and the greatest number perhaps because they were personally attracted by him.

Among these was Robinson Jeffers, one of America's leading poets. Although he was not interested in 'spiritual movements' and the name of Krishnamurti had meant nothing to him before they met, Robinson Jeffers was so attracted by Krishnamurti's personality that the two men soon became friends. I was anxious to talk to Jeffers about Krishnamurti, and I gladly accepted an invitation to visit him and his charming wife.

They lived on the coast in a house built by the poet himself with the cobblestones that lay about on the beach. He had brought them thence stone by stone until he had built the house—an unaided labour of five or six years. He spent another two years in erecting a medieval-looking tower in the garden. This tower had a steep and spiral flight of steps, and on its top you entered a tiny room, with panelled walls, a comfortable bench and a superb view, looking across the beach towards the sea. The sound of the waves, the dark outlines of the rocks—from the grey stones of which the tower and the house had been built—the wind and the salty freshness of the atmosphere made you think of Cornwall.

I spent an afternoon in the small tower room, talking to my host about Krishnamurti. A log fire was burning in the small fireplace, and California seemed very far away. Robinson Jeffers was reserved and almost morbidly shy. He was wearing khaki breeches and leggings, and but for his dreamy eyes, and the great tenderness in the expression of his mouth, he might have been an English farmer. Both his wife and his friends had warned me that I should have to do most of the talking, but once or twice I succeeded in making him speak. 'For me', he said in a slow and hesitant manner, 'there is nothing wrong in Krishnamurti's message—nothing that I must contradict.'

'Do you think his message will ever become popular?'

'Not at present. Most people won't find it intelligible enough.'

'What struck you most when you met him for the first time?'

'His personality. Mrs Jeffers often makes the remark that light seems to enter the room when Krishnamurti comes in, and I agree with her, for he himself is the most convincing illustration of his message. To me it does not matter whether he speaks well or not. I can feel his influence even without words. The other day we went together for a walk in the hills. We walked for almost ten miles and as I am a poor speaker we hardly talked at all—yet I felt happier after our walk. It is his very personality that seems to diffuse the truth and happiness of which he is always talking.' Robinson Jeffers lit his pipe, which had gone out, and then again sat watching the flames in the grate.

'Do you think Krishnamurti's message has matured sufficiently to have found its final formulation?'

'It may be final, but I wonder whether it has quite matured yet. It will be mature when its words are intelligible to everyone. At present there is a certain thinness in them. Don't you think so?'

'I agree. At times I simply don't know how to write about him. Whatever I put on paper sounds unconvincing and makes Krishna-

murti appear the very antithesis of what he really is: it makes him look a prig or a complacent fellow. In writing, his arguments are irritating and his logic unconvincing. And yet they sound so true when he uses them in conversation. It is almost impossible to describe him, for so much depends upon his personality, and so little upon what he says.'

'Yes, it is almost impossible to describe certain personalities.'

'I think this may be mainly because intellectually he is still a youth. Most of his life has been spent in the theosophical nursery where his own ideas were stifled. Many teachers impress us by their knowledge; Krishnamurti does it by his very person, and not by his particular brand of widsom.'

'I suppose it is so', replied Jeffers in his slow, quiet way. 'Others will have to find a clear and convincing language to express his message. After all, it would not be the first time that the followers of a teacher have had to build the bridge across which a new message can reach the masses.'

I met several people in Carmel who told me that they were unable to grasp Krishnamurti's message, but all of them confessed that he gave them a feeling of happiness and calm that they had never known before.

On Sunday afternoons anyone could come to the hotel at which Krishnamurti stayed, and there join in a general discussion held in the big lounge. I was more amused than impressed by these discussions, in which purely personal questions were asked, often irrelevant, or prompted merely by intellectual curiosity. I told Krishnamurti what I thought, but in his opinion he could help people to find truth for themselves if he and they evolved the answers together.

It was always Krishnamurti's personality that most of all impressed people. They felt that they were in the presence of a man who lived his teaching even more convincingly than he preached it. I was told that when Krishnamurti entered America he was granted a limited time of residence there. It was suggested to him, however, that, if he cared to state that he entered the country as a teacher, he would be allowed more favourable conditions. Krishnamurti refused to do so, for an official acknowledgement of his status as a teacher would have produced many of those misleading implications that he had cast overboard when he dissolved all his organizations. Even for the sake of a long-term visa he would not compromise.

VII

At the end of a week, spent in Krishnamurti's company, I felt that I could formulate my own opinions about his teaching. What were

the main points of his message? Truth can only be the result of an inner illumination, and this can only be enjoyed by one who fully recognizes the many-sidedness of life. We find truth through permanent inner awareness of our thoughts, feelings and actions. Only such an awareness can free us from our shortcomings. Life becomes a reality through a loving self-identification with every one of its moments, and not through our habitual and mechanical pursuits. No asceticism or similar disciplines are necessary, for our former limitations disappear automatically by full living.

All he demanded from people was that they should live a personal life of inner awareness. This, possible only through love and thought, opens doors to truth. In such a life none of our habitual shortcomings—envy, jealousy, hatred and possessiveness—can exist.

The problem of how far Krishnamurti's language could be understood seemed to me of paramount importance, and I decided to talk to him once again about it. It was one of my last days in Carmel, and we went out for our usual walk. 'I have been talking to all sorts of people who have met you,' I said, 'and I have tried to discover whether your teaching is as convincing to them as it is to me. Many consider it most complicated, and it makes me sad that they should find it so hard to understand what seems to me the simplest truth.' I sighed, but Krishnamurti only smiled: 'It seems complicated because of our power of free choice.'

'Free choice?' I interrupted in surprise.

'Indeed, it is only our free choice which creates conflicts in our lives; and conflicts are responsible for deterioration. By free choice we begin to build up handicaps and complications which we are forced to drive out one by one if we are to make our way towards truth.'

'Then we should despair, according to you, just because we have been given the faculty of free choice? Would it be better if we were as the beasts, without knowing what free will means?'

'Not at all. Only the unintelligent mind exercises choice in life. When I talk of intelligence I mean it in its widest sense, I mean that deep inner intelligence of mind, emotion and will. A truly intelligent man can have no choice, because his mind can only be aware of what is true and can thus only choose the path of truth. An intelligent mind acts and reacts naturally and to its fullest capacity. It identifies itself spontaneously with the right thing. It simply cannot have any choice. Only the unintelligent mind has free will.'

'I have never come across this conception before,' I said; 'but it sounds convincing.'

'It can be nothing else; it simply is like that.'

I had noticed on various occasions before that he never discussed for the sake of discussion or for my sake but in order to clarify for both of us the problem under discussion. The reason why he had to expose himself to the accusation of evasiveness became clear to me.

Suddenly Krishnamurti stopped: 'Many things became clearer for me since we started our daily conversations. I meant to tell you the other day that after one of our first talks I had a particularly vivid experience of inner awareness of life. I was walking home along the beach when I became so deeply aware of the beauty of the sky, the sea and the trees around me that it was almost a sensation of physical joy. All separation between me and the things around me ceased to exist, and I walked home fully conscious of that wonderful unity. When I got home and joined the others at dinner, it almost seemed as though I had to push my inner state behind a screen and step out of it; but, though I was sitting among people and talking of all sorts of things, that awareness of unity never left me for a second.'

'How did you come to that state of unity with everything?'

'People have asked me about it before, and I always feel that they expect to hear the dramatic account of some sudden miracle through which I suddenly became one with the universe. Of course nothing of the sort happened. My inner awareness was always there; though it took me time to feel it more and more clearly; and equally it took time to find words that would describe it. It was not a sudden flash, but a slow yet constant clarification of something that was always there. It did not grow, as people often think. Nothing can grow in us that is of spiritual importance. It has to be there in all its fullness, and the only thing that happens is that we become more and more aware of it. It is our intellectual reaction and nothing else that needs time to become more articulate, more definite.'

VIII

I was leaving Carmel on the following day, and when we reached our favourite spot under the pines I knew that this would be our last talk together. 'Krishnaji,' I said as I took his hands between my own, 'my visit is coming to an end. I am very grateful to you for these wonderful days. Nevertheless I must talk to you once more about something which we have discussed many times.'

'What is it? Don't feel shy—go ahead.'

'I appreciate that you are not a doctor and that you cannot prescribe spiritual pills for people. But once again: how do you expect to help others? I know you want them to live their lives in such fullness as to become truthful, and so truthfully as to be able to give up possessiveness, jealousy and greed. But such an inner

revolution requires a strength possessed only by few. You have achieved it, and you are standing on a mountain top on which you can live in a state of unity with the world that amounts to constant ecstasy. But you forget that millions and millions of us live in the plains. Few could endure a life of continuous ecstasy. It would burn them up. I can see that it is the only life worth living; but I don't see that we are mature enough for it.'

Krishnamurti came quite near me—as he had often done before—looked deep into my eyes and said in his melodious voice: 'You are right. They live in the plains and I live, as you call it, on the mountain top; but I hope that ever more and more human beings will be able to endure the clear air of the mountain top. A man infinitely greater than any of us had to go his own way that led to Golgotha; no matter whether his disciples could follow him or not; no matter whether his message could be accepted immediately or had to wait for centuries. How can you expect me to be concerned with what should be done or how it should be done? If you have once lived on a mountain top, you cannot return to the plains. You can only try to make other people feel the purity of the air and enjoy the infinite prospect, and become one with the beauty of life there.'

This time there was no sadness in Krishnamurti's voice, and in his eyes there was a light that was love, compassion, sympathy. Not the faintest sign of hopelessness was in him when we rose to walk slowly up the hill to the house in which he lived. The sun was setting, and ribbons of green and pink clouds were stretched across the full length of the sky. Night comes quickly in these regions, and in a few minutes the light would be gone.

IX

We shook hands and I descended towards the beach as I had done every day since my arrival at Carmel. It seemed quite natural on this last day of my visit that the whole of Krishnamurti's life should unfold itself before me. Is there another life in modern times comparable with his? There have been many masters and teachers whom their followers worshipped. But none of them had been torn out of an ordinary existence to be anointed as the coming World Teacher. None of them had been accepted by the East and the West, by the oldest and the youngest continent, by Christians, Hindus, Jews and Muslims, by believers and agnostics. Neither Ramakrishna nor Vivekananda had been brought up and educated for their future messiahship; neither Gandhi nor Mrs Baker Eddy, neither Steiner nor Mme Blavatsky had known such a strange destiny. Neither in the records of Western mystics nor in the books of Eastern yogis and

saints do we find the story of a 'saint' who after twenty-five years of preparation for a divine destiny decides to become an ordinary human being, who renounces not only his worldly goods but also all his religious claims.

It was quite dark, and the first stars were beginning to appear. The mysterious pattern of Krishnamurti's remarkable fate was becoming clearer, and I began to understand what he had meant when he said that till a few years ago life had been a dream to him and that he had scarcely been conscious of the external existence about him. Were not those the years of preparation? Were they not the years in which the man Krishnamurti was trying to find himself, to replace that former self through whom Mrs Besant and Charles Leadbeater, theosophy and a strange credulity, acted for over twenty years?

Indeed, was not Krishnamurti's a supreme story? The teacher who renounces his throne at the moment of his awakening, at the moment when the god in him has to make way for the man, at the moment when the man can begin to find God within himself? Have not even the years in which his spirit lingered in dreams been full of a truth that as yet is too mysterious for our comprehension?

CHAPTER XIII

Conclusion: The Living God

> 'There can be no doubt that the scientist has a much more mystic conception of the external world than he had in the last century.'
>
> SIR ARTHUR EDDINGTON.

THE number and popularity of the various men and their teachings described in the foregoing pages may seem surprising to many readers. Mysticism, occultism and similar movements have always existed; but for centuries they were the private domain of religious recluses, of small esoteric schools, occasionally of saints, frequently of fanatics. Today the situation is different. Many of the people given up to these researches are scientifically schooled; and the subjects of their investigations are no longer the privilege of little

sects of initiates who jealously guard them from the eyes of the world, but are open to everyone anxious to learn. The legitimate sciences, though reluctantly, are beginning to take them more seriously than they did twenty or thirty years earlier, and the dividing line between the two is in many instances no longer visible.

One of the most distinguished scientists in England, Sir Ambrose Fleming, the perfecter of the two-electrode thermionic valve, and thus one of the fathers of modern wireless, declared in January 1935, in his presidential address to the Victorian Institute and Philosophical Society of Great Britain, that 'the origin of man is to be looked for in the creative power of a self-conscious Creator'. Sir Ambrose went so far as to attack 'those sections of enlightened clergymen' who deny the possibility of miracle or exceptional action on the part of Deity', and who assume that 'no events have ever happened or can happen which are outside of our present limited experience of Nature'.

Equally startling are the pronouncements of Sir Arthur Eddington in his lectures in 1934 at Cornell University. After putting the weighty question, 'Why should anyone suppose that all that matters to human nature can be assessed with the measuring rod ?' he asserts 'that the nature of all reality is spiritual'. Sir Arthur represents an entirely new spirit in science, for he confesses 'that the scientist has a much more mystic conception of the external world than he had in the last century', and that he 'is not sure that the mathematician understands this world of ours better than the poet and the mystic'.

In my own experiences I came to the conclusion that all genuine teachers are trying to find the same truth. Differences are caused only by the differences in their state of consciousness, in their origins, or in their methods. One of them, like Keyserling, may appeal above all to the imagination; Gurdjieff employs a most complicated system, and Krishnamurti's influence derives almost entirely from the beauty of his personality; Ouspensky approaches truth like a surgeon, and Rudolf Steiner like a scientist who is also a mystic. But they are all trying to find—and then to sow the seeds of—the same truth.

As Krishnamurti said: 'There is no one who can give us truth, since each of us for himself must discern it.' Teachers can only encourage the efforts which we make for ourselves when they have pointed out to us the way.

I shall not deal in the following pages with those matters that may have enriched my mind without influencing my character. They can be studied in the writings of the teachers themselves. Only that knowledge will be expounded which was confirmed over and over again by daily life, for only such knowledge is of real help.

The principal command of all teachers, irrespective of their race, creed or method, is that a man must 'know himself'. Thus the elimination of conventions and habits becomes one of the fundamental spiritual laws. The prophet who took the visitor round the Temple of Apollo at Delphi always pointed first to the inscription over the entrance: 'Know thyself'. Plutarch in his treatise 'On the E at Delphi' states: 'The prophet said to the visitor, "Fix these words in thy memory, for they hold the key to all wisdom." ' Only through self-knowledge can we hope to understand the world as it actually is and not as it appears through the veils of our imaginings. The knowledge of oneself is the knowledge of the world inside us, and the road to truth and thus to God is shortest when we search for Him within ourselves. Eventually we shall detect Him also in the outside world, in a tree perhaps or in another person. Once we have caught a glimpse of truth we comprehend that the inner union with God is essentially little else but a life of the cardinal universal virtues.

There was a period in my life when meditation seemed the most suitable method for approaching truth, and when, following the prevailing fashion, I dabbled in yoga, without realizing that all exercises done on a basis of yoga require a personal teacher, cannot be learned from a book and should really be attempted only by those with an innately Eastern mentality or living in the East.

In the Western world we find in our prayer an exercise comparable to yoga; and, not unlike yoga, prayer can be more helpful if we know how to pray. Prayer, like any other form of spiritual concentration, can be degraded to a mechanical action, or a mere superstition. We should never pray for anything that we might be able to achieve through our own effort; we should never pray for a selfish reward; we should never pray for anything that may (even indirectly) harm someone else. But we might pray for enlightenment regarding things that we cannot possibly reach with our intellect, that are essential for the performance of a good deed. Unbelievers often say: 'If God knows everything, He also knows my needs, and therefore it is superfluous to pray.' Though God knows everything He may not wish to impose His help upon us as long as He has not been asked for them. Let us take for an illustration the case of a poor man who has a rich friend, aware of the poor man's need and willing to help. As long as the poor man does not approach him to ask for help, the rich one may find it difficult to impose his help upon him. A prayer

is an invocation by which we tell God that having exhausted all means of solution, we find ourselves forced to beg Him for help.

Neither prayer nor contemplation can replace life, for in their own sphere they are like exercises taken for physical fitness in theirs. Exercises alone cannot give us health if the rest of our life is not wholesome. Life, however, can be wholesome only if it is rooted in truth. And such a life is one lived in accordance with the fundamental laws of God. For God cannot become real until He directs every moment of our existence.

Let us assume that we are facing a difficulty far exceeding our own power of solution. It may be the loss of a beloved person, our fortune or the most precious allegiance in our life. The problem is, of course, to learn how not to cling desperately to that which we are losing without breaking down. Some people get drunk, others take to drugs, or try to forget by doubling their work. But these can act only as temporary palliatives. A rather painful personal experience taught me that truth alone can provide a cure. Truth, in this context, meant accepting the situation as it really is, that is to establish the facts of the new situation, without viewing it through the tears of resentment and grief. We cannot view facts truthfully without thought, that is absolutely honest and persistent thought. Such thought usually becomes creative, and finally reveals the right method for dealing with the problem. Persistent and conscious thought in which not merely the mind but the entire being participates provides us, according to Steiner, with 'spiritual eyes'. An exhaustive mental identification with a problem is, of course, not identical with an emotional clinging to it, which is the very reverse of facing reality. Ouspensky calls it destructive imagination, others call it mental self-abuse. Sorrowful pondering over grief destroys thought, and is a submission to negative emotions.

Negative emotions, such as hatred, jealousy, envy, sorrow, greed, resentment, do not exist in the region of the spirit, which can be nothing but truth; yet the lying propensities of our imagination make them swell beyond all proportion. Ouspensky demonstrated how a few minutes' lingering over negative emotions uses up more energy than a man requires for a fully active life of twenty-four hours.

There exists a 'machine' measuring that waste: it is formed by our knowledge of ourselves, and it begins to function the moment we register honestly our reactions to either negative or positive emotions. The more we allow hatred, jealousy and grief to rule us the more complicated life becomes, and in the end we are so tied up within that no escape seems possible. We feel worn out and deeply ashamed of ourselves. If, on the other hand, our negative emotions are

replaced by positive ones, if, for example, we meet the person responsible for our troubles lovingly and openly, we feel freer and happier. Solutions will suddenly come as though from nowhere, and where there was muddle there is now simplicity and light.

The most harmful of all negative emotions is fear. Fear destroys both the vision of truth and the power of right action. Few sayings seem wiser than that of an Eastern sage: 'It is better to be good than to fear evil.'

Just as negative emotions stand in the way of wisdom, so does love create wisdom. Of course it is difficult to change a feeling of dislike into one of love. The easiest way to achieve this is either through thought, in the course of which we discover that our negative feeling was useless, or in fact only a phantom of our imagination, or through prayer, in which we include the person we believe we most dislike. At the end of an honest prayer of such a kind the former uncomfortable feeling disappears and the difficulty, created by the person for whom we had prayed, becomes of less significance. Only persistent daily thought or daily prayer of such a kind can produce a lasting transformation, for fundamental changes are wrought solely by constant daily readjustment. If we find it impossible to pray, then it is best to cut short our lingering in negative emotions, and to force ourselves time after time to think about something entirely different.

From the moment a difficulty in life has been honestly 'thought over', the direction for right action begins to disclose itself. Nevertheless we cannot pretend, as do the Buchmanites, that as soon as we sharpen the pencil to write down our thoughts and shut our eyes, God sends us direct 'guidance'. Creative thought may indeed be of a divine nature; but this does not imply that, like manna, it falls into our lap. We have to evolve such thought ourselves, working and struggling. No believer doubts that there is grace; but grace never comes without the most painful effort on our part. Emotional willingness alone will not provoke it. Grace is like the sun and the rain. Both perform the miracle of transforming the seed into plant, flower and fruit; but first we must plough the soil and sow the seed.

III

The method of facing difficulties indicated in the preceding pages became real to me only after life itself confronted me with a problem of such magnitude that there was nothing left to me but to translate such spiritual knowledge as I may have gained during the preceding years into action.

I was on my way back from Krishnamurti in California. Three days before leaving New York on the homeward journey I received

a letter announcing that sudden and utterly unforeseen circumstances were to change the entire basis of my life. I found myself faced with the prospect of abandoning my home which had become almost a part of me, and, what was infinitely more painful, of giving up the most precious relationship in my life. Moreover, my professional and financial foundations were shaken, and there was hardly a single aspect of my life that was not crumbling before my eyes. Suddenly I was facing the prospect of founding an entirely new existence. Three hours after the fatal letter had arrived I was still sitting on the bed of my hotel room, repeating thoughtlessly to myself that I was merely experiencing a bad dream from which I should soon wake up. During the following days I seemed to be completely drained of all power of thought and will.

The first morning on board ship, I decided that the new situation simply had to be faced, no matter how painful the experience. If all my knowledge gained during many years' study was of no avail at so vital a crisis then the spiritual convictions upon which I had built my personal 'philosophy' were of no value. The situation obviously required a translation of knowledge into action.

The illumination—I can find no less pretentious word to describe the experience—came during that first morning. It grew gradually out of a determined effort during a three hours' walk round the ship's deck. I might have been less successful had I not just been staying with Krishnamurti, and had my spiritual convictions not been strengthened by his influence. At first, I attempted to eliminate all ill-feeling and self-pity, and to produce an inner state of detachment that would leave room for honest thinking. Then I tried to face the new situation in the manner described earlier in this chapter.

I certainly did not find an immediate solution for problems that were completely outside my control, but I ceased to worry about them. The fear that for the last few days had eliminated all power of thought was gone. While previously contemplation of my problems gave me acute distress, I now managed to observe them more or less dispassionately, as though I were dealing with someone else's problems. I realize now that such a change of attitude can be produced only by a thrust sharp enough to pierce the crust of habit and automatism. Both profound joy and profound pain can open doors through which we perceive truth. Great sorrow usually enables us to discriminate between reality and illusion, between fact and wish-dream. A shock caused by great joy evokes a feeling of gratitude deep enough to let all feelings of pettiness melt away. But neither sorrow nor happiness by itself can solve our problems. When either threatens to become chronic, it assumes increasingly dangerous

proportions. Permanent grief is the product of an uncontrolled and morbid imagination; the longer we allow ourselves to dwell in that state the farther we drift from truth. Permanent happiness on the other hand tends to make us callous and selfish, and equally oblivious of truth.

By the time I arrived back in England I understood fully what Krishnamurti had meant when he spoke of the necessity of suffering for the attainment of truth.

I still found it hard to get used to the idea that so many things that had contributed to my happiness were lost. But the things I was losing had no longer their former meaning to me. I had many times to fight over again my battle of that first morning at sea, and each time I gained new strength to grapple with newer difficulties. Eventually it almost became like light streaming into a room without anyone drawing the blinds.

IV

Though I had always suspected that success can be gained only if we act not for the sake of success but for the sake of whatever we happen to be doing, I had never been able to live that truth in daily life. I often pretended to myself that I did certain things merely for their own sake, but deep down I knew only too well that I was constantly watching the chances of success. The new inner 'illuminations' enabled me at last to live the gospel of 'doing for doing's sake'. I made my decisions not with regard to their possible success but merely because thought had revealed them to me. Success, then, was sure to follow as though automatically.

Even more startling was another discovery. My first misfortune, of which I had been notified by the letter I received in New York, was only the beginning of a long series of worries that followed one another almost daily after I arrived home. I was struggling constantly between giving in wearily and going on translating my knowledge into action. It was an incessant fight between hopelessness and faith, between resignation and the belief in a higher necessity. The continuous efforts to face reality were bringing new glimpses of truth almost every day, and they disclosed eventually the last stage of how to act in conformity with truth.

With a deep thrill, I perceived that the most successful way of finding a solution for difficulties that defy our own resources was that of my Christian beliefs. I understood at last what it meant not to force events but to let them solve themselves. It was not evasiveness nor was it fatalism but merely trust in the inevitable victory of truth, in the power of God. It was the admission of the superiority

of the divine method over even the cleverest method suggested by mere thought.

Even people who believe that God acts from within us often find it difficult to 'locate' Him. There is only one answer to this—God's most evident instrument within us is our conscience. It must be understood, of course, that conscience should be employed only as a 'controlling station' for actions directed by thought, and as a 'power station' only when the decisions do not depend on ourselves.

Often we think that it is within our power to alter the trend of events in our favour by forcing certain incidents. This applies most of all to the countless decisions that depend upon others. The surest way to act in such circumstances is to obey the commands of our conscience.

After having reached our conscience—not that imaginary 'conscience' which is only the result of upbringing, social environment and traditions—we ought to listen to it instead of obeying the commands of our brain. We must forget all about the possible success or failure of our action and try to realize our highest ideals.

At first such a method will seem over-idealistic. And yet to act according to our highest ideals is the only method that does not fail even in the most complicated entanglements. Driven by fear and lack of faith, we try to affect the trend of events more than we are entitled to, and we give God no chance to play His part. Hence the confusion we achieve whenever we are faced with a truly complicated situation.

Trust in the wisdom of higher powers does not exclude discrimination. Lack of discrimination leads to fanaticism, and the fanaticism of righteousness is as far removed from truth as its opposite. A life directed by our conscience with the help of discrimination can never deteriorate into fanaticism. In fact, it is in the noblest lives that we find measure and discrimination. 'A man's heart', I once read in a book by a Muslim sage, 'does not lie to him—it is always the brain that lies.'

The commands of the heart can be followed only if they are supported by courage and faith. Without courage we cannot overcome fear; and, without faith, we can have no trust in God. (People who object to the word God may replace it by any word that expresses in their opinion the directing impulse of life, such as 'the absolute', the 'sense of life', or the 'central power station'.)

My new awareness allowed me to make several other discoveries. One of them was that nothing in life happens accidentally, and

that every individual grief I had suffered had been a needed 'lesson'.

The sceptic will say: 'If you believe that everything in life works according to a plan, then it should be possible to discover the plan by some logical system. If this be so, life ought to be rational, and yet we know that it is not so.' Indeed, life is not rational, not consistent with logic. The system by which life as a whole is run is not rational but spiritual, and cannot be comprehended by intellectual means. Mystics, spiritual teachers, certain types of thinkers, poets or artists catch glimpses of it. The founders of religions, the prophets, such seers as the Delphic pythia, some of the Christian saints, men like Plato, Paracelsus, Jakob Boehme, Steiner, one or two of the great Jewish rabbis, poets like Blake, Goethe, Wordsworth, painters like Raphael *see* a spiritual structure where other people try to comprehend it intellectually.

The pattern created by the spiritual system is what we call destiny or fate. The more we try to wake up and to see truth, the more the pattern of fate reveals itself. Accidents exist only for the blind. But the doctrine of fate must never deteriorate into fatalism; for, besides fate or, as the East calls it, *karma*, there is also, not exactly free will, as we wrongly call it, but freedom of understanding.

Let us for a moment consider the two directing powers called fate and free understanding. Fate is the power that carries us along through life and that we cannot escape: it embraces such different elements of our existence as the century in which we were born, our race and nationality, our intellectual and social class, our physical features, our good and bad qualities. We cannot escape fate, but we can work in conformity with it. That is where freedom comes in. We are free to comprehend the facts given by fate, and to discriminate according to our intelligence. Our comprehension and our discrimination shape our will. Both fate as it is given to us, and freedom of understanding as we use it, work together and can never be separated. They are like the horizontal and vertical planes of the steps in a staircase—the one cannot exist without the other. Summing up, we can say that fate and personal freedom act side by side, as the divine and the human powers within us. For it is wrong to assume that God's knowledge of our future necessarily determines it. Seeing something is not the same thing as coming to a decision about it.

I had always felt that there was a direct connection between my conduct and the way fate treated me. But the proofs of such a connection were too vague to be accepted intellectually. The main difficulty in the establishment of some law was that my actions and the apparent answers of fate were separated by intervals

of time too long to allow me to discover the link between the two.

This changed once I began to make a real effort to allow truth to direct my actions. The difference between the working of fate in the earlier and the later days was a difference both of visibility and speed. Whereas the missing link had formerly been almost indiscernible, now it was becoming clearer every day. Occasionally I could almost foretell in what way fate would react to my own movements; and at times these reactions would take place within twenty-four hours. The laws evolved from my experiences could be summarized thus: (*a*) the more consciously we act in life, the more clearly the pattern of life is revealed; and (*b*) the better we know what is right and wrong, the more quickly does fate act.

I reached the conclusion that both good and bad thoughts, emotions and deeds evoke corresponding reactions on the part of fate. I do not call good and bad what are considered as such by conventional morality, but what we are told by our conscience and by the very best within ourselves. (The best within ourselves always commands not only a truthful but also a loving attitude in which there is no room for negative emotions. Thus truthful action must always be also loving action. In the realms of the spirit truth and love become almost identical.)

Let me illustrate my last discovery by an example. Suppose I should try to achieve a certain success by a subtle lie, a pronouncement that was not quite fair to another person, an attempt to influence someone in a manner that could be defended intellectually but would not withstand the judgment of conscience. Formerly I often succeeded in my aims, without incurring any evident response from fate. When, however, I began to see the meaning of truth, retribution would come almost immediately and so unmistakably that there was no doubt of the direct connection between my misdeed and its 'punishment'. Even if I achieved success at first, something would happen the next day to turn it into failure. If, on the other hand, I acted in accordance with my better self, success was inevitable. This was true not only of my actions but equally of my most secret thoughts and emotions. There was no escape from conscience: if I tried to cheat it, fate immediately retorted by 'punishing' me.

The greater our knowledge the greater our responsibility, and we are forgiven our sins so long as we do not know that we are sinning; the moment we are conscious of the lie that every bad deed implies, we no longer have the right to sin. If fate is kind, it warns us by sending punishments without delay. If we go on committing such sins as thinking evil, lying to others or to ourselves, revelling in

negative emotions, the punishments become heavier. Eventually we realize that we shall ruin ourselves unless we cease to sin.

VI

Many people say: 'What is the good of my being decent if everyone round me cheats? If others consented to be decent, I too would behave decently.' The answer is that we should behave decently not for ethical purposes or to convert others, but merely for our own sake. By living in accordance with the highest within ourselves we may deprive ourselves of the weapons of that astuteness that we suspect our enemies of employing, but we submit ourselves to an intelligence that is more efficacious than that of the cleverest of our enemies. Instead of trying to force events that are beyond our powers we replace the brittle weapons of our intellect by mightier weapons.

Far be it from me to preach ethics of one sort or another. All I am attempting is to show from personal experience that action in accordance with what is best within us enables us to solve our difficulties more efficiently. A life lived in this way is not a life of negative submission, of lazy expectancy, or responsibility eschewed. It is a life of much wider consciousness and of constant inner activity in which spiritual inertia plus physical activity have been replaced by constant awareness plus physical economy.

And this is the only life in which the God within us can cease to be merely an abstraction. It is a life in which the God within us emerges from the shadows of our ignorance, and steps forth to become the living power that commands all our life. It is the God that makes of every day a Sunday. It is the only living God.

Postscript: The Last Thirty Years

It is almost thirty years since *God Is My Adventure* was first published, and its reissue in the present edition calls for some sort of summing up. Although over three decades my views on many subjects have inevitably changed, I find no compelling reason for departing from my original appraisal of the personalities described in this book. Many of the movements initiated by them have survived their founders, and it thus seems opportune to cast a brief glance at the course of their evolution.

Hermann Keyserling's fascinating personality and his highly popular philosophy are today little more than a memory. This is not surprising. Keyserling insisted on calling himself a philosopher and indeed believed himself to be the most significant thinker of his time. He was in fact endowed with a brilliant mind, thriving on paradox; was a provocative speaker and a stimulating writer; but he stopped short of being a philosopher. Lost in admiration of himself, he was lacking in all humility, and would not accept other points of view. Though he possessed great personal courage, and claimed to be willing to become a martyr for his convictions, that willingness proved to be little more than a pose. The position of an independent thinker in Nazi Germany was of course an extremely difficult one, and no outsider could fathom the full magnitude of his problems. There were nevertheless a number of Germans who, making no grandiose boasts, refused to compromise with Nazism and were ready to pay the ultimate price for their convictions. When in the early years of the Weimar Republic liberal and leftist tendencies were popular, Keyserling enjoyed being called the 'Red Count' and did nothing to disavow that title; yet a dozen years later, he claimed to be among the 'founders' of Nazism, and went out of his way to prove how close he was in spirit to its philosophy. It is difficult not to see in him an opportunist.

I doubt whether his books are still being read even in Germany, although at one time they enjoyed enormous international popularity.

While he was alive, the yeast of his mind acted as a potent cerebral ferment among people who without it might never have produced a single original thought. And for a short time he succeeded in transforming a sleepy provincial capital in southern Germany into an intellectual centre that attracted some of the best minds of the time. Its radiation extended far beyond the frontiers of the Vaterland.

George Jeffreys was in the tradition of Protestant revivalists, such as have appeared in unbroken succession for centuries. Without making any mark on Britain's spiritual or intellectual life, he brought happiness to many, deepened their faith, and appears really to have possessed the gift of healing. In many respects, he was not dissimilar to the more famous and more sophisticated Billy Graham. Without being a true innovator, he typified the era in which he was active, and illustrates one far from negligible aspect of religious life in the thirties.

None of the movements described in the preceding chapters proved as remarkably viable as Frank Buchman's Oxford Movement, under its newer label of 'Moral Rearmament'. During the intervening years it has become even more streamlined than it originally was, and its claims even more inflated. Madison Avenue itself could not have engineered a more resounding success. Its thousands of new adherents trumpeted its 'revolutionary' achievements throughout the world. According to them, Moral Rearmament had reconciled formerly warring employers and employees, and had solved labour disputes, in a dozen countries; in just as many countries it has induced Communist leaders to 'see the light', and banished the prospect of their victory; it had, moreover, established harmony between such hereditary foes as the French and the Germans, the whites and the blacks in the U.S.A., British and Africans, Christians and Jews, oppressors and oppressed: in short, it had achieved what no church, political party, government, trade union or doctrine had ever been able to achieve. The relentless persistence of the same old problems and antagonisms, as vexing as ever in those very lands in which the movement claims its victories, is a circumstance that they seem willingly to overlook. True, a few wolves have sat down with some lambs round the tables of elegant Swiss and Scandinavian hotels, but the predators have evidently walked home still protected by their wolves' clothing, and the lambs have remained as mutton-headed as they were before their cup of tea. The movement makes

great play with this prime minister and that ex-king, this 'leading intellectual', movie star or captain of industry, that party leader. Yet the politics, the movies and the industrial organizations of those luminaries can hardly be said to have profited from the rich blood, purified by the new 'morality', alleged to be flowing through their reconstituted veins. Though Buchman's heirs have indulged in costly propaganda, arranged their own theatrical performances, published their own books, and, last but not least, continued the master's tradition of holding mammoth congresses in luxurious hotels, they do not seem to have achieved much beyond the temporary 'change' of an individual or group here and there. The projected world-wide-scale 'moralization' of society seems as distant a goal as ever.

In the eyes of impartial observers, the 'philosophy' of Moral Rearmament has, even after thirty years, shed none of its underlying frivolity, and has continued to treat the mystery of man's relationship with God as though it were the latest commodity advertised on TV commercials. There is no reason to doubt that the movement has gained many new adherents. But numbers attracted to it are not a valid measuring rod for assessing the truth or the value of a doctrine. Hitler's success in arousing the passionate adulation of fifty million Germans hardly proved that his doctrine was positive or rooted in truth.

After a lapse of thirty years, I would not modify anything I wrote previously about Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Steiner and Krishnamurti. Unlike Moral Rearmament, Gurdjieff's and Ouspensky's teachings could at no time become sufficiently popular to appeal to the masses. Not only was there something intrinsically esoteric about them and 'hermetic' about the manner in which they were communicated by their founders; they also demanded an effort of will and mind that only a few were able to make. Though both Gurdjieff and Ouspensky have now been dead for a good many years, their teaching is kept alive by their followers in the U.S., England and France, who hope to transmit it to members of the younger generation. It was inevitable that with the death of the two teachers their message should lose some of its vitality. For they both always insisted that doctrines such as theirs could not be transmitted through books or even the most meticulous lecture notes, demanding as they did the individual supervision and guidance of a living 'director'.

* * *

Rudolf Steiner, the centenary of whose birth was celebrated in 1961 rather more widely than could have been anticipated at the time of his death, in March 1925, has certainly grown in stature during the intervening years. Even intellectuals who at one time took meagre notice of him, have been turning their attention to his writings and his methods.

Contrary to the forecasts of prophets of gloom, the entire anthroposophical movement expanded greatly after the second world war. In West Germany alone twenty-six schools were newly established, or re-established after having been closed by the Nazi regime. Similar schools came into being in many other countries, including the U.S. with four schools on the East coast and three in California. Homes for retarded children, that is to say, curative educational institutions, now exist in many parts of the world, with three new ones in the U.S., and the most important in Scotland. In the agricultural sphere a new section for the study of nutrition was formed; and great progress has been made in medical work, with emphasis on cancer research. While the movement's world centre has remained at Dornach in Switzerland, there are national centres in London, New York and a number of other capitals. At the Goetheanum in Dornach some three hundred students work full-time throughout the year, attending classes in anthroposophical education, the drama, eurhythmy, painting and sculpture, their courses extending to three or four years. Once each month a public congress is held at which some particular aspect of anthroposophy is discussed. Special congresses are held at Easter, Michaelmas and Christmas. The main event of the year, however, is the July-August congress, usually attended by several thousand people not only from Europe but also from most continents. The climax of this congress is the traditional performance of Goethe's *Faust*, in its entirety. Few existing institutions show a greater activity or attract a more diversified audience. The sale of both Steiner's own books and of the Society's publications has been growing from year to year. Altogether it is evident that the relevance and vitality of Rudolf Steiner's message were not limited to the inter-war years, and that anthroposophy has become one of the significant spiritual movements of our time.

* * *

Of the four most influential teachers described Krishnamurti is the only one who is still alive. He has continued to follow his lonely path and, at the same time, to attract large crowds in America, Europe and Asia. His doctrine has not changed over the years—how

could it indeed?—nor yet has his method; but, in recent years, he has been turning to the written word more easily than he was wont to do. Without identifying himself with Vedanta, Zen or any other philosophy, he has derived enough from them to make a strong appeal to thoughtful easterners and westerners. One of his staunchest admirers is Aldous Huxley. He is as uncompromising as ever, and it does him no injustice to conjecture that his personal magnetism is as potent as the force of his doctrines. Yet this is in spite of his own strictures; to this highly charged emotional response to himself he is passionately opposed, as he is to all claims to 'mastership'. It is this steely determination not to evade or dilute what he considers to be essential truth, not to permit anything to stand between that truth and those who seek it, that so greatly enhances the value of what he stands for. It also suggests that while most of the mid-twentieth century teachers may soon be forgotten, the seeds thrown out by Krishnamurti's inner compulsion rather than by his deliberation will germinate and bear fruit for many years to come. In so far as Krishnamurti can be identified with any doctrine, this consists simply of an individual, spontaneous recognition of truth without the help of any religions, philosophies or 'therapies' advocated by others, without, in short, any form of 'crutches'. He should therefore be called an awakener or elucidator rather than a teacher.

II

It is not the purpose of this brief postscript, as indeed it never was of the present book itself, to deal with orthodox religion or philosophy proper. Yet inevitably, as though by the back door, both have made an occasional, brief appearance.

So far as I am aware, the years following the second world war have produced no spiritual 'guides' comparable with some of those discussed in the preceding pages. Consequently, there have been no exchanges for earnest but uncommitted seekers, and orthodox philosophy of the traditional patterns should therefore have won their adherence. The question of their acceptance of theism can hardly be said to have arisen, for during the years of upheaval, there was a wholesale rejection of such tenets; still valid in the thirties, they rapidly diminished in persuasiveness, so that many a post-war intellectual grew extremely suspicious of the very notion of a deity, and, in consequence, of spiritual pursuits that could claim no 'scientific' motivation. England's Royal Society of Psychical Research in which, in the past, scientists of the stature of Oliver Lodge, writers as famous as Conan Doyle, were wont to rub shoulders with theosophists, spiritualists, telepathists, laymen and clergymen, was almost

forgotten; while Dr Rhine's academically conducted investigations of paranormal phenomena became front-page news. Whereas in the thirties, even a non-theological book could carry the word 'God' in its title without causing higher brows to rise even higher, nowadays such presumption of general concurrence would make even low-brows squirm. Even metaphysics, of late years, have been forbidden to encroach upon philosophy.

In the thirties, despite the emergence of the Logical Positivists, there were still established philosophers with a strong popular appeal: Whitehead and Russell, Maritain and Berdyaev left a profound impact upon many non-specialists, and thus upon twentieth-century thought in general, as also did Kierkegaard, Heidegger and several of their existentialist successors. The same could not be said of post-war philosophers, at least in Great Britain and the U.S. (Popular Indian philosophers who wrote in English, such as Sri Aurobindo and Mohammed Iqbal, belonged to the pre-war years.) There was still Bertrand Russell, just as fertile, intellectually as provocative as ever; but by the sixties he was appearing more frequently in the garb of an apostle of unilateral disarmament and as a self-appointed mentor of such 'amateurs' as Kennedy, Krushchev and Nehru rather than as a philosopher. English philosophy was little read and less understood beyond strictly academic circles.

For more than two thousand years philosophy concerned itself chiefly with the contemplation and elucidation of truth, particularly as it applied to what are called the great verities of existence, including metaphysics and even morality. The *why* of existence, its motives and aims, in short, the questions that have troubled man from the days when he was first able to think for himself, these were considered the proper subjects for philosophical investigation. It is precisely these subjects that were shunned by British and American post-war philosophers who, ever since the advent of the Viennese Ludwig Wittgenstein, have been turning their attention to semantics rather than to philosophy in the accepted sense of the term. Definition of words and terms has become their hobby-horse. All they found themselves able to admit as logically respectable have been empty tautologies ('All four-legged animals have four legs') or statements of empirical fact. Metaphysical, moral and aesthetical subjects came to be included among the banned subjects as too disreputable to be admitted into philosophical company. In consequence, the layman has found himself completely neglected, for the truths he was hoping to find elucidated by the one discipline whose prerogatives they had always been, were shunned by the profes-

sionals as too vague, too sentimental, too religious or too unscientific for philosophical discussion.

Grasping at individual reeds of support in Wittgenstein's latter writings, some philosophers attempted to lay the foundations for more constructive work. By and large, however, and with a few exceptions, such as e.g. the late J. L. Austin (vide his *Sense and Sensibility* and *How to do things with words*), the philosophers pursued their task in isolation. While it is not beyond the capacities of the average educated person to understand Plato, St Thomas, Schopenhauer or Bergson, he feels like a complete ignoramus when faced by modern English philosophy. Apart from the professional jargon in which so much of it is written (the same applies to much modern writing on political science, especially American), it seems to be concerned with abtruse hair-splitting, little different from that of the earliest scholastics who lived in a world of abstractions devised by themselves and of no interest or profit to anyone but themselves.

Linguistic precision is, of course, a pre-condition for any philosophical discussion, as it is for the work of a scientist or poet. It is a means, however, and not an end. But both the poet and the scientist set out with the acknowledgement of certain basic truths: they accept what is universally understood by terms such as 'tree', 'logarithm', 'above', 'larger than', and they agree on the differences between such statements as 'I believe', 'I understand', 'I know'. Modern English philosophy would seem to accept no postulate, and in its efforts to define words finds itself running in circles without ever reaching the avowed aim. In their concern with establishing the ultimate truth expressed by a word, modern philosophers seem to forget that such a truth does not, and cannot, exist. For words are nothing but symbols of reality and can never be equated with reality itself. Unlike the symbols of mathematics, verbal symbols are only approximations of truth. Moreover, they can never mean exactly the same thing to different people, and the meaning of many of them alters, however slightly, from generation to generation. Human thought can cope correctly with empirical questions, i.e. those whose answers depend upon data of observation, and formal ones, i.e. questions that depend upon pure calculation irrespective of 'factual' knowledge, in short questions of mathematics, logic, grammar or chess. In philosophy, on the other hand, we can never arrive at more than a 'likely' truth. Ultimate truth, being exclusively spiritual (i.e. Plato's 'Ideas'), is bound to suffer distortion the moment the attempt is made to transform it into the medium of its symbol, be this verbal or visual. So much preoccupied with sharpening their tools, modern English

philosophers seem to have forgotten the concrete purpose for which these tools are to be used. They remind us of 'hobbyists' who spend years collecting magnificent equipment and furnishings, yet never get down to using them.

The purpose of the foregoing observations is not criticism of modern philosophy as such—a task left best to professional philosophers—but merely to demonstrate its irrelevance to the general intellectual strivings of the moment. While a Whitehead, a Russell affected the thought (and possibly the behaviour) of people outside the fold of their fellow-philosophers, the same cannot be said of their successors. We thus find that the person who before World War Two could gain mental stimulus and spiritual benefit from a Steiner or an Ouspensky, and who, during the post-war era, has been seeking his intellectual nourishment in contemporary philosophy, is now the hungry sheep who looks up and is not fed.

* * *

One resource for him could have been theology. Yet, so far as a layman can judge, these last fifteen years or so have brought into prominence no theologian of such vigour and compelling lucidity that a following of ordinary men, avid for instruction, form naturally around him. Barth, Niebuhr, Tillich, the Thomist Maritain, Christopher Dawson all achieved their wide audiences before the war, and have not been followed by younger men of corresponding stature and influence. It is less surprising that in the Greek Orthodox Church, whose main habitat used to be Tsarist Russia, no one has arisen to take the place of a thinker like Nicolas Berdyaev.

* * *

Psycho-analysis is, of course, still with us; and, at this date, it is hardly necessary to speak of its impact upon modern man. It is one of the stand-by themes of novelists and film-makers, and its terminology has become the daily jargon even of the illiterate; moreover, its main work and influence are confined to the field of therapy. Only in its Jungian form has analytical psychology encroached upon specifically spiritual domains, allying itself with metaphysics, religion and even mysticism, particularly in its Asian garb. In this version, it has remained chiefly the prerogative of learned minorities. In any case, Freudian and Jungian psycho-analysis cannot be regarded as a post-war phenomenon. It is too closely enmeshed in general twentieth century development, and thus does not belong to a review of trends characteristic of the post-war years.

Comparing the thirties with the sixties, we must admit, then, that the latter era has not produced men comparable with Steiner, Ouspensky or Krishnamurti. Even those who do not agree with their doctrines must concede that these men were outstanding. All three showed a sterling integrity, and were passionately devoted to the pursuit of truth along new and unorthodox lines. Moreover, in an age of over-specialization, both Steiner and Ouspensky proved themselves true universalists, by no means amateurs but trained in a many-sided scientific discipline. It is their universalism that sets them so markedly apart from spiritual and intellectual investigators of more recent years.

III

The quest for a 'key to salvation' never flags. And one thing is fairly certain: if numbers are to be our criterion, the most acceptable doctrine over the last fifteen years or more, acceptable that is to seekers after 'new truths', has been Zen philosophy. Whatever the truth and the beauty of Zen as practised in the Far East, especially in Japan, one would hesitate to affirm that its effects in the western world are fraught with either truth or beauty. In the works of a few serious scholars who penetrated to its core, Zen has no doubt retained most of its original values. But these works were separated by a deep gulf from the offerings of the western popularizers, in whose hands Zen soon became a fashion for people possessing few of the qualifications essential for its true comprehension or application.

Instead of producing the specific emotional and mental self-discipline that Zen as practised in Japanese monasteries is said to develop, its western version was wont to lead to the opposite: an alarming lack of self-restraint that went by the name of 'spontaneity', and a disregard of the moral and social precepts without which communal life easily disintegrates into anarchy. Falling on particularly fertile ground in California, Zen spread from San Francisco and Los Angeles across America, to become the gospel of the beatniks.

In the fifties, Californian book shops were full of books on Zen by expatriate Englishmen, by ex-Nazis, Americans and, a few, by Japanese. Universities, ladies' clubs, even certain churches opened wide their doors and pocket-books to lecturers on Zen; both reputable and more doubtful academic institutions introduced courses on Zen; young couples who had never before given a thought to religion went into matrimony in a Zen ceremony officiated by an appropriately clad 'priest'; and in many a bar, jazz club or drug

store in San Francisco's North Beach, in Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Sausolito, an inevitable topic of conversation would be Zen. Yet a genuine Zen scholar from Japan would not have found it easy to recognize the doctrine that had shaped his own character and behaviour in its Californian reflections, both flippant and self-righteous.

As manipulated by its Californian high priests, Zen demanded an unencumbered response to every moment of life, without rationalization, without the application of a will or a discipline dictated by the intellect. Truth, they preached, was the spontaneous response to every demand of life, unfiltered through the 'distorting' medium of ethical or rational 'impediments'. No answer was given to the obvious questions as to what the Zen adept was to do if his 'spontaneous response' impelled rape, pick-pocketing or murder, or in fact any 'unrationalized' expression of his lowest animal urges. As understood by its western addicts, Zen usually came to mean taking the line of least resistance, and abandonment of all self-discipline. If the student of Zen did not feel like washing, being courteous, treating his fellow-men respectfully—well, he just did none of these things, but allowed himself to be spontaneously irresponsible.

It might be that the 'spontaneous living' of the Californian type can make you happy if you live on an isolated island or in a community of like-minded. However, like-mindedness as to self-indulgence is apt to lead to animosities—or to murder. Even so, few peoples live under such conditions, for they usually belong to a community within which life bereft of all self-restraint would soon turn into libertinism and worse. And we know what happened in most of the isolated little communities whose members sought utopia: within a short time most of them suffered from the unbearable frictions that finally led to dissolution. No society can live without rules, however irksome these might be to certain of its members. In beat-Zen terminology, order, discipline, team-work, submission of the individual to the community, all these are dirty words or phrases, and for the introspective, egocentric and boorish Zen beatnik the average normal person is a 'square'. While there have been exceptions, as a rule, this distortion of Zen appeals to people who are unbalanced, who suffer from some neurosis, who have failed to make a success of either their private or their working life. That western Zen has been of help to certain individuals hardly outbalances its baneful effects upon the majority. It has probably freed some of their frustrations, and shaken them out of their previous uniformity, thus acting as a corrective to the sterilizing effects of American conformism, but, by

and large, it cannot be said to have replaced what had been negative by anything positive or creative.

Shaky as the Californian beatniks' pseudo-Zen philosophy might be, the English 'angry young men's' *appareil de sauvetage* was spiritually not more convincing. Their common denominator was revolt against existing politico-economic structures, the 'Establishment', combined with inability to improve that which they could not approve. The great difference is that the 'angry young men' had more articulate spokesmen commanding wider audiences. The beatniks have left next to no imprint upon America's intellectual life (*pace* Messrs Kerouac, Corso and Ginsberg), but their English colleagues have been particularly active in the literary sphere, and have in fact become identified with a by no means negligible movement, both in fiction and in the theatre. Whether the beatniks with their addiction to Zen went deeper than the 'angries', as many of them claim, is open to doubt. And the first question promptly arises, deeper into what? Mystery or mire? What matters is that, unlike the 'angry young men', they have remained intellectually sterile, while the protest of the former was merely destructive.

Closely allied to the Zen fashion was the surge towards eastern religions and philosophies which had already made their appearance before the Second World War. It found its highest expression in the popularization of Vedanta, particularly as attempted by Aldous Huxley and Christopher Isherwood, inevitably again in California. California became the haven of all sorts of swamis and yogis and gurus, and fairly sumptuous Vedanta temples—much patronized by the rich—arose in Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and San Francisco, not to speak of all sorts of minor ashrams, academies and retreats. As was to be expected, far more numerous than the serious students of Indian wisdom was the vast amorphous army of seekers attracted mainly by the exoticism of eastern doctrines and their abundant facilities for self-deception. Instead of the more clearly defined and more formalized western creeds, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the far-eastern doctrines as followed in the west offered a diet more adaptable to individual taste. Their appeal was primarily to the emotions, and at least part of that appeal derived from the mise-en-scène of flowers, saffron robes, the sound of muffled gongs and soft chants, and visions of the Ganges, lotus-covered ponds and the bliss of Nirvana. Much of the effort that went under the name of

yoga, meditation or thought-control was little more than wishful thinking and day-dreaming. Whatever the ultimate effects of Californian Vedanta-cum-Buddhism, it made its adherents feel not only 'good' but also superior to their less fortunate brethren whose sole Sunday fare was a Presbyterian sermon or Roman liturgy. Obviously, then, as an inducement to decent humility it cannot claim to have been an outstanding success.

IV

One characteristic of post-war youth that would undoubtedly strike the mythical visitor from Mars is its addiction to easily obtainable pleasure. Jazz and speed seem to rank highest in the scale of these self-indulgences. Jazz of course enjoyed popularity even before the war, but it is only since that it has become a veritable cult. I am not referring to the serious fan for whom jazz is as meaningful as Bach and Mozart are to the lover of classical music, but to those infinitely larger numbers who spend night after night in dance halls or jazz cafés giving themselves with complete self-abandon to the almost hypnotic spell of their chief intoxicant. The highbrows among them are wont to claim for these effects spiritual values similar to those produced by their indigenous music and dances on Africans, West Indians and the slave ancestors of American Negroes. But are such claims justified? The magic significance of early jazz or African and West-Indian music and dance in their original habitat was rooted in the religious concepts of those participating in them as well as in their historical background and social environment. Even today this applies to the beautiful dances and the drum-music of countries such as Mali or Senegal; but it is quite irrelevant to the habitués of a jazz palace or café in London, Chicago or Rome, whose religious and cultural background and environment are completely different. Apart from its erotic element, what the western addict seems to be seeking in jazz and its musical progeny is a release from the 'drabness' of life. Jazz is for him an intoxicant that can lead to an escape from the post-Hiroshima world and from the mushroom cloud on the horizon. It is but another manifestation of the prevailing '*Angst*'.

It is symptomatic, too, of the post-war decline of self-discipline. However ludicrous Italian Fascism, and however horrible German Nazism, their regime called for a great deal of self-discipline on the part of their youthful supporters. The expected reaction has occurred in both countries, with the almost universal determination to take the line of least resistance in the pursuit of pleasure; and the idea of self-discipline is dismissed as outmoded. Recent statistics have shown

that, except for the work of students, serious reading in Germany and Italy is the province of the middle-aged and the elderly. Yet in the twenties and early thirties, the young folk of Germany were voracious readers, and their relaxations were Boy Scouts activities and the week-end country hikes of the *Wandervögel*. Many of the participants were inspired by a genuine idealism; these youngsters were not necessarily motivated by the desire to wear a uniform at any cost, and prepare for wars to come. In the sixties, their successors were smug, materialistic, self-centred, and frantically pursuing financial success and the enjoyments to which such success provides the key.

* * *

It would probably require a thorough psychological investigation to ascertain whether the post-war generation's mania for speed must also be attributed to *Angst*. Speed is of course man's only new sensation. For thousands of years the highest speed he could enjoy was that of a fast horse. The young man and his girl who in the twenties and thirties joined bicycle clubs, and were happy with weekend 'flips' at 20-30 miles per hour, now find no motor-cycle or automobile fast enough. It does not much matter to them where they go, what town or hamlet awaits them at the end of their drive, so long as they can enjoy the sensation of going too fast for safety. The normal aim of locomotion—to arrive from one place at another—is utterly foreign to them. For what they are enjoying is not merely speed, but the liberating sensation of getting away from the place from which they started. Few of them realize that the constant urge to escape from a *place* is really the desire to get away from *themselves*.

Millions of cars move each week-end along the roads of Europe and America carrying people who go nowhere in particular but wish to 'move', to get away. When you pay a week-end visit to friends in the States, sooner or later you will find yourself invited to 'go for a drive'. If you ask 'where to?' the answer will be 'just for a drive, you are sure to enjoy it'. Aimless movement from one spot to another has become one of the main week-end pastimes of millions of people who really feel at ease only when speeding through the anonymous no man's land of endless highways. When at home, they find their chief solace in escaping from everyday reality into the fictitious world of the little illuminated screen. Television and the automobile offer them the types of reality they accept without questioning. Has their world really become a caricature of Schopenhauer's '*Vorstellung*'?

The outstanding ideological event of the years under survey was the emergence of communism not merely as a politico-economic system in Russia but as a distinctive philosophy of supra-national validity, and accepted by many as an assurance of the 'better life'. Many western intellectuals and idealists came to believe that communism offered a solution to most human ills. The warnings of their disillusioned colleagues with first-hand knowledge of the 'promised land', such as George Orwell, Ignazio Silone, André Gide or Arthur Koestler, where dismissed even without an attempt at consideration. Whereas other new creeds attracted relatively small groups, the appeal of communism cut across national, social and intellectual boundaries to become almost world-wide. It found as ready a response among semi-literate and dissatisfied Africans and Asians as among highly sophisticated professors of western universities, among solid trade unionists as well as among cranks with a chip on their shoulder. Yet to each one of them communism meant something different, the one constant factor being a grudge against the existing order, an order identified as 'foreign colonialism', 'feudalism', 'capitalism', and the 'Establishment'. That many of those who equated communism with the 'good life' came from the ranks of the under-privileged, or those who had failed to make a success of their life, may not have been entirely coincidental. (The opposite phenomenon was illustrated by Christian Science, with its disproportionately large number of 'successful' men and women. This by itself is, of course, not a proof of either the soundness or the opposite of the respective creeds.) The fanatical devotion of millions of people to communism indicates that it has long since passed its purely socio-politico-economic stage, and has become both a philosophy and a way of life. Those who accept it as such, if only in their wish-dreams, are obviously not interested in any other creed, and no new Steiner or Krishnamurti will be of much interest to them. Yet when all is said, there remains one aspect of the problem that leaves us puzzled. Why is the number of Europeans, Americans, Asians or Africans who wish to emigrate to Russia so small? And why do millions of non-Americans still have so ardent a desire to emigrate to the U.S., adding their names to the list of applicants, even though they know that the quota is full and that they may have to wait several years before the gates of the 'land of Capitalism' will open to them?

* * *

In practically all the movements discussed in the present book, religion, whether in the form of emphatic acceptance of the deity

(as in the case of Steiner) or in that of some supernatural dimension (as in Stefan George's case), formed a vital element. Though not admitted in so many words, the mystery of the unknowable dominated even Ouspensky's horizon. In his books and his addresses to classes he refused to discuss the subject of God, but in private conversations with his more intimate students, he was willing to do so. Steiner's philosophy is of course based on an acceptance of the supernatural, even the occult, and is centred in the personality and the mystery of Jesus Christ. Today's corresponding movements eschew anything that suggests the 'supernatural', as if God Himself were out of fashion and acceptable only to the unenlightened. This non-theistic character brings these movements much closer to communism than to any other form of worship. Starting from premises very different from the dialectical materialism of Marx and Lenin, and setting out for entirely different goals, they, too, whether philosophical, ethical or literary, concern themselves primarily with the material aspects of life, with the present, and with the application of the methods of the physical sciences. Western-type Zen derived much of its popularity from the fact that its concerns were limited to the so-called 'present', to the responses of the moment. Thoughts of the future, preoccupation with the mysteries that lie at the core of the great philosophies and religions—from Moses and Socrates to Pascal and Nietzsche—were dismissed as having no usefulness.

Another feature common to present-day movements is their cosmopolitanism, which is quite in harmony with the growing cosmopolitanism of post-war life: jazz, films, super-markets, blue jeans are more or less the same the world over. 'The automobile, the aeroplane, television, Espresso bars, etc.' writes W. H. Auden, 'are creating a way of life which is the same from San Francisco to Vienna . . . There are no more distinctive cultural centres. What is Paris? The place where Hegel is taken seriously. What Vienna? The Karajan city where Wagner is played in complete darkness. Today every intellectual is at once more isolated and more internationalized than his predecessors' (Encounter, January, 1963). However gratifying it is that, at long last, we are moving towards some semblance of unity, it would be deplorable if this could be achieved only at the sacrifice of purely national characteristics. For what is most genuinely 'national' in a given culture usually expresses what is truest and best in it. Yet modern culture is becoming rapidly denationalized. Stravinsky is certainly far less Russian than was Rimsky-Korsakov or Borodin, Schoenberg less Austrian than Schubert, Picasso less Spanish than Goya. The books of modern novelists are much less indicative of their national origins than were

those of Dickens, Flaubert or Mark Twain. But, like western Zen, which has lost most of its original Japanese characteristics—self-discipline, obedience, attention to detail, respect and reverence—there are many commodities which are not for export. Sharing is one thing, but reduction to the lowest common denominator is another.

VI

The purpose of the foregoing pages has not been to provide an exhaustive comparison between certain trends in the thirties and the sixties, but merely to add a few personal observations, in character with the personal nature of the entire book. To draw valid comparisons between the two epochs is impossible. Though the thirties looked gloomy enough to those with golden memories of 1900, yet in the thirties, we still lived in an age of peace, and though the menace of Hitler darkened many a horizon, it did not dominate it completely. There still seemed to be scope for individual spiritual and intellectual search, for the weighing of one doctrine against another. In the after-war years the localized menace of Hitler made room for the all-inclusive menace of atomic destruction. However much the thinker, the writer or the artist may be devoted to his particular task, he cannot escape from the feeling that there is a certain air of unreality about his aims. Could any form of literature, art or religion provide a valid answer to the all-pervading threat? Could the work of a novelist, thinker or painter still engage the whole of his being as a novelist, thinker or painter, as it did thirty years earlier? The problem facing the world seems too big to fall within the grasp of any of the existing creeds or doctrines. The sixties represented not so much a sequel to the thirties as an entirely new departure. For the first time in history man found himself in surroundings that he *knew* were beyond his control; even though he went on groping and hoping that some miracle would enable him to master them, nothing less than a miracle would serve. Unfortunately miracles are not within man's domain.

Another event that radically changed the situation in the sixties was the emergence of Africa and Asia, and the white man's recognition that his days as the master of the world were counted. The white man with his creeds, standards, philosophies and techniques began to find himself on the defensive. Since the birth of ancient Greece, that is for over two thousand years, his supremacy had never been questioned, and while the civilizations of China and South-East Asia were retained within their geographical frontiers, the white man

fashioned the thought and the *mores* of the Americas and Australia as well as of Africa and Asia themselves. What the impact of Asia, and particularly of the new giant, Africa, will ultimately be no one can foresee. But it requires no prophetic propensities to assert that the white man's role will not be the same, and that both history and civilization will be flowing through entirely new channels. Terms that were valid for comparing different periods in western history can no longer be applied, and the new situations will call for a new vocabulary.

VII

Yet we still have to live our individual lives with our private problems; and sooner or later, we find ourselves erecting our own little personal philosophies, fashioning some of the requisite bricks from the teachings of those who came before us and others from our private experiences. As this book indicates, its author, too, has tried to benefit from both these sources. Speaking for myself, over the last quarter of the century, I have derived the main material for the structure of my philosophy from Islam and in particular from the teachings of the Arab mystic Ibn Arabi.

Most of my life I have been interested in Islam; for a time, at an early age, I 'went native' among the Arabs and Berbers of North Africa, and ever since have maintained contact with Muslim countries. But it was only after the second world war that I was brought into closer touch with Islam, spending several months each year in the Arab world and teaching the tenets of Islam at a university. Without abandoning my Christian beliefs, I have become increasingly attracted to Islam's simplicity and concreteness, its tolerance and its sympathetic attitude to human weakness, its refusal to draw a categorical line between the spiritual and the material, and thence its refusal to emphasize dualism. Christianity's ultimate ideals may or may not be more elevated, but those of Islam seem less otherworldly and thus more within reach of the ordinary person.

Like most great religions, Islam has produced its crop of philosophers who never strayed from the orthodox path, and its mystics—the Sufis—who interpreted their creed in a fashion shaped by intensely personal spiritual experiences which could not always be accommodated within orthodoxy. More often than not these mystics were regarded as heretics, and even had to pay the supreme price for their unwillingness to compromise. The most famous example is of course the 'heretic' martyr Hallaj.

It is in the writings of one of these Sufis that I have found solutions to puzzles that had remained unsolved for me by other doc-

trines. Ibn Arabi (or Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn 'Ali Muhyi al Din al-Hatimi al Andalusi, 1164–1240), though a mystic, was also a philosopher and a scholar of enormous erudition. Thus he was able to translate his mystical experiences into a philosophical system, in other words, to express the 'inexplicable' in terms acceptable to reason. The problems to which he provided eminently convincing answers are those of the co-existence of a perfect God and an imperfect universe; of a God of absolute unity and a world of multiplicity; of the apparent conflict between free will and predestination; of the duality of good and evil, active and passive, beauty and ugliness; of the true nature of evil and death, of time and eternity, and, finally, of love. While most of these problems are of course treated by other thinkers, none of them provides answers equally satisfying. Philosophers who attempt to remove the stumbling block of dualism usually replace it by a monism undistinguishable from pantheism, a concept which, however pleasing to sentiment, is intellectually of doubtful validity. Within the entire body of Semitic thought, Jewish, Christian and Muslim, Ibn Arabi seems the only one whose philosophy is centred in complete non-dualism, irreproachable both in the light of faith and in that of reason.

Though his two main works, *Fususu'l-Hikam* and *Futuhat al-Makkiyyah* are couched in a language that reveals its meaning only after years of patient study, and though the *Futuhat* contains five hundred and sixty chapters and is almost three thousand pages long, and though its author uses a phraseology and an imagery entirely his own, these drawbacks are as nothing in comparison with the depth of the answers that he finally reaches. Even Ghazali's mystical concepts are dominated by orthodox Islam, suggesting that he laboured to make them acceptable to the theologians. Ibn Arabi's vision is far more original, and though often hidden behind a curtain of orthodox terminology, reveals truths that are startingly novel, regardless of whether they can be brought into accord with orthodoxy or not.

I do not wish to imply that Ibn Arabi has made me renounce those Christian or other principles that proved their worth in my struggle with personal problems. But he did illumine the truth of many of those principles, making it possible to apply logic to their interpretation. Perhaps the most significant truth that he reaffirmed and explained for me was that, while it is vital to attempt living up to our ideals, whatever happens to us must be accepted as inevitable. It is inevitable because, in the language of Islam and Christianity, it manifests the will of God, and in Ibn Arabi's parlance, the Law from which no one and nothing can escape.

INDEX

Abdullah, Achmed, 143, 155
Andreae, Valentin, 44
Apponyi, Count, 164
Aristotle, 38, 40, 41, 208
Auden, W. H., 249
Austin, J. L., 241

Babajan, Shri Hazrat, 82
Bach, Johann Sebastian, 17
Balfour, Arthur, 166
Beck, Leo, 20
Berdyaev, Nicholas, 240
Bergson, Henri, 164, 208
Bertram, Ernst, 28
Besant, Mrs Annie, 37, 59, 61, 62–5, 66, 69, 70, 77, 130, 173, 177, 182, 199, 202, 206, 213, 214–15, 223
Bessaraboff, Nicholas, 122
Besterman, Theodore, 65, 77, 199, 200
Bibliander, 104
Bismarck, Prince Otto von, 17, 18, 160, 166, 168
Blake, William, 231
Blavatsky, Mme H. P., 130, 142, 143, 175, 222
Boehme, Jakob, 45, 231
Bourdelle, Antoine, 64
Bô Yin Râ, 29–31
Bragdon, Claude, 121–2
Brüning, Dr, 160
Buchman, Dr Frank, 59, 103–20, 177, 236
Buddha, 20, 43, 74, 79, 125, 133, 174, 176
Bülow, Prince, 160

Cancrin, Countess, 18
Chamberlain, Houston Stewart, 18
Christ, Jesus, 37, 41, 46, 52, 53, 74, 79, 97, 106, 110, 113, 120, 177, 201, 202, 212, 222, 249
Collison, Harry, 187
Cosgrave, John O'Hara, 155
Coward, Noel, 58
Crépieux-Jamin, 173
Crossman, R. H. S., 108, 109, 118

Dalai Lama, 155
Dalcroze, 139
Dante, 9
De La Warr, Lady Muriel, 60, 61, 64
Disraeli, 160
Dodge, Mrs Mabel, 141
Douglas, James, 79–80, 83
Doyle, Conan, Arthur, 239
Duncan, Isadora, 139
Dunlop, D. N., 197
Durham, Bishop of, 106

Eddington, Sir Arthur, 224
Eddy, Mrs Baker, 222
Einstein, Albert, 30, 123, 159
Eliot, T. S., 58
Ellis, Havelock, 164

Fichte, I. H., 38
Fichte, J. G., 38
Flaubert, Gustave, 18
Fleming, Sir John Ambrose, 224
Förster-Nietzsche, Frau, 36
Frederick the Great, 168
Freud, Siegmund, 30, 164, 208

Gandhi, 79, 83, 174, 202, 222
Gasset, José Ortega Y., 164
George V., King, 91
George, King of Greece, 105
George, Stefan, 16, 26–8, 30, 58, 59, 159, 175
Ghenghis Khan, 16
Gide, André, 207
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang, 21, 27, 36, 47, 159, 175, 192–3, 231, 238
Graham, Billy, 236
Gundolf, Friedrich, 27
Gurdjieff, George Ivanovitch, 59, 131, 136–55, 224, 237

Haldane, Lord, 166
Hamilton, Loudon, 112
Harrison, Marjorie, 106, 107, 109, 111, 113

Heidegger, 240
Hitler, Adolf, 18, 160–1, 237, 250
Homer, 9
Hoyos, Count, 35
Huxley, Aldous, 164, 207, 239, 245

Inge, Ralph, Dean, 47, 112
Isherwood, Christopher, 245
Ibn Arabi, 251–2

Jacks, Dr L. P., 112
Jaloux, Edmond, 163, 164
James, William, 198

Jeans, Sir James, 9
Jeffers, Robinson, 217–19
Jeffers, Mrs Robinson, 217–19
Jeffreys, George, 59, 90–102, 236
Jinarajadasa, C., 70
Johnston, Alva, 104, 105, 111
Joyce, James, 207

Kant, Immanuel, 17, 18, 49, 208
Kantorowicz, E., 27
Kassner, Rudolf, 18
Kerenski, Alexander, 90
Keyserling, Count Alexander, 18
Keyserling, Count Hermann, 16–25, 30, 35, 48, 59, 88, 159, 162–81, 209, 224, 235–6
Keyserling, Countess Goedela, 19, 170–2, 178, 179
Keyserlingk, Count Carl, 188
Kierkegaard, 240
Klages, Ludwig, 28
Krishna, 79
Krishnamurti, Jiddu, 37, 59, 60–78, 88, 96, 173–4, 177, 198–223, 224, 227, 228, 229, 237, 238–9

Lansbury, George, 74–5
Laotse, 20
Lawrence, D. H., 141, 207
Leadbeater, Charles, 37, 62, 63, 130, 175, 201, 223
Leeuw, J. van der, 70
Lennard, Reginald, 117
Lermontoff, M. J., 129
Lewis, C. Day, 57
Lodge, Sir Oliver, 239
Ludwig, Ernst, Duke, 19, 21, 22, 165
Luther, Martin, 168

Mackenzie, Sir Kenneth, 53
Madariaga, Salvador de, 164
Mann, Thomas, 159, 164
Mansfield, Katherine, 140–1
Marcault, Emile, Prof., 70
Marie, Queen of Rumania, 105
Maritain, Jacques, 240
Marx, Karl, 58
Maughan, Thomas, 38
Milton, John, 9
Moltke, Helmuth von, 34, 35
Moltke, Frau von, 34, 35
Morgenstern, Christian, 184, 196
Morgenstern, Frau, 184
Morris, C. R., 118
Morris, William, 26
Moses, 41, 113

Napoleon I, 159
Nietzsche, Friedrich, 36–7, 129

Olcott, Col., 130
Orage, Alfred, 139, 140, 141, 142, 152
Ouspensky, P. D., 59, 63, 88, 121–36, 147, 148, 224, 226, 237

Pallandt, Baron Philip, 65, 68
Paracelsus, 231
Plato, 20, 38, 40, 231
Plutarch, 225
Pourtalès, Guy de, 164
Powys, Llewelyn, 139
Prajadhipok, King of Siam, 105
Priestley, J. B., 117
Pythagoras, 40

Rajagopal, 68, 202
Ramakrishna, 198. 222
Raphael Sanzio, 231
Rasputin, 140, 146
Rhine, Dr, 240
Rilke, Rainer Maria, 159
Rittelmeyer, Friedrich, 39, 45, 46, 47, 53, 184

Rockefeller, J. D. (Jr), 105
Roots, J. M. 104, 106, 115, 118
Rosenberg, Alfred, 18
Ross, Sir Denison, 79
Rosenkreuz, Christian, 44
Rothermere, Viscountess, 121–2, 123
Russell, A. J., 111
Russell, Bertrand, 240
Russian Empress, 21

Sauerwein, Jules, 34
Schneiderfranken, Joseph (*see* Bô Yin Râ), 30
Schopenhauer, Arthur, 18
Schumann, Robert, 161
Shelley, P. B., 9
Shri Meher Baba, 59, 79–88
Siegfried, André, 164
Slade, Miss (Miraben), 83
Spengler, Oswald, 16, 30
Steffen, Albert, 182, 196
Stein, Freiherr vom, 168
Steiner, Frau Marie, 48
Steiner, Rudolf, 16, 30, 33–53, 58, 59, 63, 88, 96, 123, 129, 139, 146, 159, 174–5, 177, 181–97, 206, 222, 224, 226, 231, 237, 238, 249
Stresemann, Gustav, 160

Tagore, Rabindranath, 24, 25, 173, 174
Turgenyeff, Ivan, 129
Twitchell, Ken, 106, 120

Valéry, Paul, 164
Vallentin, Berthold, 28
Victoria, Queen, 21
Vivekananda, 198, 222

Wagner, Richard, 18, 161
Waugh, Evelyn, 58
Wegman, Dr Ita, 192
Weimar, Prince Karl August of, 21
Weingartner, Felix, 28–9
Whitehead, Prof., 240
Wilhelm, Richard, 20
William II of Germany, 21, 34, 49
Wilson, Woodrow, President, 49, 50
Wittgenstein, Ludwig, 240, 241
Wolfskehl, Friedrich, 27
Wolters, Friedrich, 27
Wordsworth, William, 47, 231

Ziegler, Leopold, 20
Zwingli, Ulric, 104



GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD
London: 40 *Museum Street, W.C.*1

Auckland: 24 *Wyndham Street*
Sydney, N.S.W.: Bradbury House, 55 *York Street*
Cape Town: 109 *Long Street*
Bombay: 15 *Graham Road, Ballard Estate, Bombay* 1
Calcutta: 17 *Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta* 13
New Delhi: 13-14 *Ajmeri Gate Extension, New Delhi* 1
Karachi: Karachi Chambers, McLeod Road
Mexico: Villalongin 32-10, *Piso, Mexico* 5, *D.F.*
Toronto: 91 *Wellington Street West*
São Paulo: Avenida 9 *de Julho* 1138-*Ap.* 51
Buenos Aires: Escritorio 454-459, *Florida* 165
Singapore: 36c *Princep Street, Singapore* 7
Hong Kong: 1/12 *Mirador Mansions, Kowloon*